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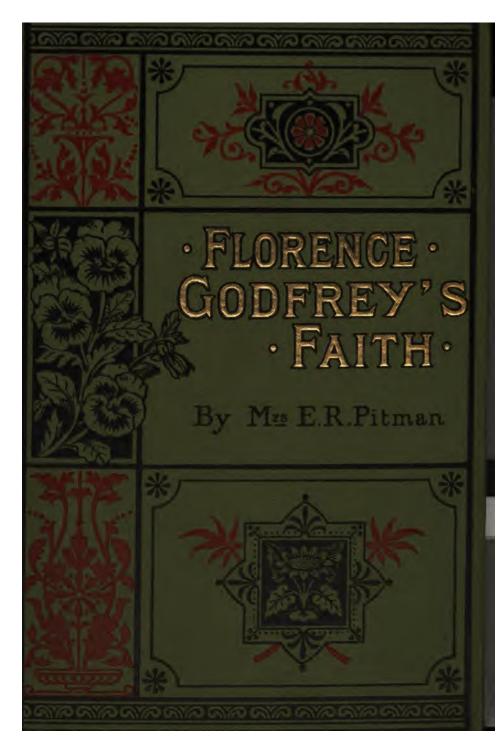
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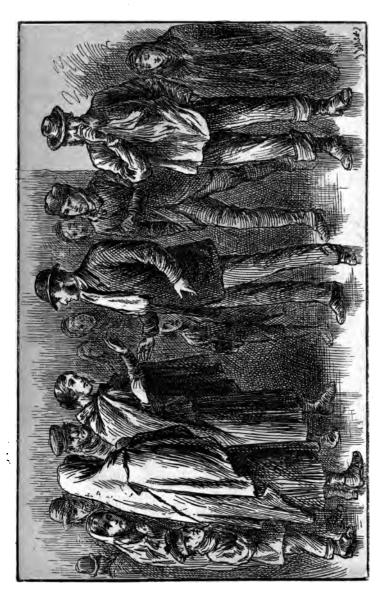
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# FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITH.



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## FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITII.

### A STORY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.

BY

### MRS. EMMA RAYMOND PITMAN,

AUTHORESS OF "MISSION LIFE IN GREECE AND PALESTINE;"
"HEROINES OF THE MISSION FIELD;" "VESTINA'S MARTYRDOM;" "PROFIT AND LOSS;"
"GARNERED SHEAVES;" "MY GOVERNESS LIFC,"
"LIFE'S DAILY MINISTRY;" ETC. ETC.

### ILLUSTRATED.



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### FLORENCE GODFREY'S FAITH.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A FACTORY SCENE.

"What might be done if men were wise!
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother,
Did we unite in love and right,
And cease our scorn of one another.
Oppression's might would be imbued
With kindling drop of loving-kindness,
And knowledge pour from shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness,
All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrong,
All vice and crime might die together,
And fruit and corn, to each man born,
Be free as warmth in summer weather."

It was a gloomy winter afternoon in November, 1863. The air was damp and raw, the atmosphere thick and depressing, and Manchester looked most forlorn and comfortless in the choking fog which was fast obscuring the A crowded city, with its noisy streets, sloppy pavements, lofty houses, smoky chimneys, and hurrying, ceaseless tide of life, is never a very cheerful spectacle on such a winter's afternoon as that on which my story opens; but, if, added to all outward appearances of discomfort and gloom, social and political troubles cloud the horizon, and make men's hearts quake with fear, then the outlook becomes gloomy indeed. The "dark days before Christmas" are so dull and depressing, that we cannot afford to have any other elements of sorrow or gloom infused into them, beyond what nature herself furnishes at this "saddest season of the year;" but the Manchester folks had trouble enough, and to spare, at this particular era—and not they alone, for all Lancashire sat in sackcloth, mourning because of the paralysis of the great cotton industry, for which the

county had been so long world-famous.

As I said, the city lay enveloped in fog. The short day was coming to a close, and here and there the gas was beginning to be lit in the shops, causing the windows to appear dim and misty in the general gloom; while, as the atmosphere inside got more heated, the moisture on the window-panes rolled slowly down in great trickling drops, making little channels, through which passers-by could peep into the interiors. But, as they did so, it seemed noticeable that everywhere the faces wore the same look of saddened anxiety, of worry, and carking care; while shop after shop displayed its wares to no purpose, for not a customer appeared inside. The American civil war was paralysing the cotton culture and export; the nation which was engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand contest could think nothing of commerce or merchandise while her sons were pouring out their life's blood in the fratricidal struggle. Slavery must stand or fall, according to the result of that struggle, and while war and bloodshed and desolation stalked through the land, making homes empty, and hearts bereft, a million of our working population also shared, in large measure, in the consequences of that mighty revolt. The cotton manufacture of England had developed with such mighty strides that at the lowest computation, a million or more of our fellow-subjects depended for bread upon cotton-spinning. But for months and months past, the shadow which had arisen, at first as small as a "man's hand," had widened and darkened until it spread over all the horizon. In place of abundant work, the operatives were beginning to be familiar with short work, lessened wages, and threatening poverty.

Depending as we were upon the slave labour of the Southern States for the production of cotton, the outbreak of this rebellion had suddenly checked the production and stagnated the markets. No cotton was forthcoming, for both land and men were laid under fierce tribute to supply the "sinews of war," and no cotton, meant lack of employment, closed mills, poverty and destitution to the Lancashire cotton-spinners. It had come almost to the worst now. Most of the mills had gone through the usual programme of

shortened hours, half time, quarter time, and some had closed for good, while the owners figured in the bankruptcy lists. Others there were who were prudently retiring from the field of trade while yet they could save their credit, and resolving to close their mills until better days should dawn. Among these was the firm of Goodhugh and Sons, whose mill occupied a position in one of the most populous parts of Manchester; and on this dark, gloomy Friday afternoon in November, the announcement had been first put forth to the mill hands.

There they stood—a motley group, but all intent on the one subject. Rough bearded men, anxious careworn women, lanky, under-sized youths, pale-faced girls, and cute, knowing children-all busy pondering, talking, speculating, and discussing. Their somewhat uncouth but expressive dialect, their wooden clogs, their shawls of curious patterns, their short, well-worn pipes, all assisted in adding character to the scene, and helped the beholder to realize what a vivid picture of Manchester working life was before him. Rumours of this stoppage had spread among the hands before; the mill had only been working half time for some months past, but the workers had borne diminished means cheerfully, and even thankfully, as they looked at others who had suffered more than themselves, hoping and believing that times would change. So they had changed, but greatly for the worst, for the announcement which had been put up that afternoon, informed them all that the mill would be closed. until the cessation of hostilities or the opening of foreign markets made it possible to obtain raw cotton at a price which would render the manufacture remunerative. notice was worded plainly enough, but rather sadly; it was easy to see, from the perusal of it, that it was against the wish of the firm it was put forth. The Messrs. Goodhugh were known far and wide as just and liberal employers. They had furnished employment to their operatives as long as it was possible to do so; but at last, yielding to the pressure of circumstances, had, against their desire, come to this conclusion. Was it any wonder that the excited group —and they only the remnant of a larger gathering—should give way to their feelings, and express their anticipations of sorrow aloud? The sorrow and the hum of voices became so loud that Mr. Godfrey, the head overlooker, came out to see if he could quell the agitation. It was little comfort that he could give, however; but the operatives crowded around him as if they would fain cling to the last chance of hope, if hope there were still existing.

"Tell us, Mr. Godfrey, please, is there no chance of going on again?" said a decent, respectable looking man.

"No, I fear not; at least for a time."

"But, mon, how are we to live? we shall all be clemmed together," put in a poor pallid-faced woman. "The bairns hadna enough before, and now it'll be just starving."

"I hope not," replied Mr. Godfrey. "No one need starve in England, you know; and the difficulty is only for a time. If we can tide over a few months, things may turn. Cotton may come in from India, or Egypt yet, and the firm

would only be too glad to commence work again."

Mr. Harland Goodhugh sat in his office listening to these words; and while his heart went with them, his cooler judgment dissented, for well he knew that they were already fearfully embarrassed. Before the firm would commence again—even supposing that Indian or Egyptian cotton should come into the market—they must see their way clear through their liabilities.

"I wish them Southerners had to suffer in our stead," said a youth with a thoughtful face; "it seems very hard that we English should want for bread because of their

obstinacy."

"Still, for all that, my man, you'd not mind suffering a little to let the oppressed go free, to set the slave at liberty,

would you?"

"No, no, mon; you're right, Mr. Godfrey," struck in several voices in answer to the overlooker's question. "Them planters have had it all their own way long enough; let them cultivate their own cotton now."

"You see," said he, as he went on comforting them, "you will not suffer unnoticed and unbefriended. All England is sympathizing with us; subscriptions are being opened in every town and city on our behalf, and you may depend upon it that we shall be remembered. Don't be afraid of

your children starving; it cannot happen here. We must all suffer, it is true, but we suffer for a noble cause."

"Ay, but the children don't understand that," said a woman. "My man, he drinks away most of his earnings, so I shan't miss his; but when the bairns come to me and ask for food, or show up their naked feet, what can I say? I've been half-starved for years past with my man's drinking, and it was as much as I could do to get a meal for the bairns day after day. Now, God help us;" and she burst out weeping.

"It's no good to tell us about not starving, mon," said another. "My mate saw a couple of lads as belonged to the Hayner's mill, buried last week, and their wives said they died for want. Lancashire folk are not good beggars, I reckon. They know how to work and spend, but they

don't know how to beg."

"Ye're right there, lad," said another. "We'll never beg; but they say we'll have to go to the parish. That'll be a trial, loike, to most of us. I've never had a penny of parish money yet, and I'm thinking I'll not get on with pauper's fare much."

"It cannot be helped, my lads," said Mr. Godfrey, as he returned to his thankless task again. "You know the old proverb—'What cannot be cured, must be endured.' You Lancashire folk will not let it go forth to the world that you

were cowards, just at the last, will you?"

"Nay, nay, Mr. Godfrey; but it's hard work to be brave upon an empty stomach. But we'll just try it," returned a man who had not spoken before. "Come along, lads; Mr. Godfrey would help us if he could, but he can't, so we must e'en bear it. The darkest hour is just before the dawn, you know."

And slowly, by ones, twos, and threes, the saddened group dispersed, wending their way homeward in the dim twilight, sad-hearted enough. As they trudged along, the dismay which filled their minds was something terrible. Lancashire promised to be one vast aggregation of pauperism, instead of busy, remunerative industry; and the class that felt it most was that large, respectable working class which is provident and careful. Five hundred homes

were rendered full of sorrow that night by the decision of the Messrs, Goodhugh.

Among these five hundred homes were a large proportion of well-stocked comfortable ones. The members of the firm liked to gather around them men who bore characters for steadiness, sobriety, and good conduct; and these felt the news most keenly. Their "household goods" must all be stattered now, sold to provide food for the little ones, while they, the bread-winners, were seeking employment in distant Others there were, like Mr. Godfrey, who, filling a more responsible position and receiving higher remuneration, were possessed of more means wherewith to breast the storm; and even to them the outlook was very gloomy. It is trying to draw upon one's hardly-spared savings, knowing not how long it will be before there is any chance of replacing them, and with the constantly recurring dread of changing the last shilling, and coming to poverty after all. And yet a third class remained—perhaps as numerous, or more so, than either—the totally unprovided for, who by reason of improvidence, intemperance, or low remuneration, would be now utterly dependent upon charity. Not a few young girls could be numbered in this latter class-not a few who attended the Sabbath-schools of Manchester, and sat within the sanctuaries, Sabbath after Sabbath. remuneration was just high enough to earn a decent maintenance in prosperous times, but then there was nothing to And as of late they had had half-time wages, they were already very poor—so poor that it only needed this additional stroke to render them utterly destitute. men who were intemperate would at once, with their families, sink to the lowest level of starvation and pauperism—a state in which even then the poor wives and children would have the worst of it. God help them all! It was a dreary home-going for them all that night.

### CHAPTER II.

#### FLORENCE'S HOME.

"Let us take heed that no arrears
Are due to those whose silent tears
Are calling on us night and day,
For debts which mercy ought to pay;
Let us be sure that we have heard
The claims of misery's lowly word,
And that our lips have never driven
The helpless and the spirit-riven,
With harsh denial."

A PRETTY little semi-detached villa, about a mile out of Manchester,—that is, away from the busy thoroughfares;—a six-roomed brick house, with trim garden-plot, and rose-bushes, which, although bare now, bore in the season varieties of different colours;—this was the home that John Godfrey entered that evening, about an hour later than that of the interview with the mill hands which we recounted in our last.

As he passed inside the porch, and opened the door, a girl of eighteen met him in the little hall and looked up into his face, as if seeking to know the worst. It was evident that her mind had been prepared for the catastrophe which had come upon them. As she looked up she said, "Is the mill stopped, father?"

"Yes, Florence. Closed for good, I fear."

The girl turned away, and preceded her father into the parlour, where her mother, a tall, slender woman about forty, presided at the table, which you could see was laid in expectation of the father's arrival. Mrs. Godfrey looked at her daughter, asking if the mill was really closed, and as Florence answered in the affirmative, a deeper shade of sadness passed over her face.

Florence was a tall, delicate-looking girl, so delicate in her appearance that you would have supposed her to be unhealthy, but she rarely found reason to complain. A mass

of dark hair adorned a well-developed head, and a pair of grevish-blue eyes revealed the existence of a large amount of intelligence and thought. Her face, although youthful, was cast in such a mould that you could see in it more of the woman than the child. She was one of those girls who, by reflection, observation, reading, and association with their elders, acquire a maturity of thought which does not come to others less fortunate and less thoughtful. as much difference between young people, with reference to the exercise of their reason and the culture of their minds, as between the trees of the forest. Some of these appear verdant with foliage, and abounding in fruit even in youth, while others seem to have scarcely taken root, and the passer-by must look and look again for many long years before he will see even a modicum of fruit. Godfrey's was one of the early-developed minds. reading, and addicted to studying people as well as books, favoured also with a good education and a fair amount of culture in the home of her birth, she had acquired a maturity of thought beyond her years. Insensibly, almost, she was the companion of her father, the stay of her mother, and the counsellor of the younger children, before she had herself reached the years of womanhood; and all this without pride or self-consciousness. Indeed, her unassuming demeanour was only another proof of the superiority and nobility of her character.

Of the other children, who were all younger than Florence—four of them—the most noticeable was Alfred, or, as he was familiarly called in the home circle, "Alf." He was a lad of fifteen, with an open, honest sort of face, outspoken, thorough-going opinions, and a manner which commended itself at once to the most casual observer. If Mr. Godfrey most prized his daughter, I think Mrs. Godfrey was prouder of the son. Mothers are usually proud of their sons, but there was something very winning about Alf. Godfrey, as he tossed aside his books with that free-and-easy air which suited him so admirably, and coming forward, addressed his mother with all the gentlemanliness of behaviour and spirit which he could command. Boisterous and daring as he might be out of doors, among his school-fellows, Alf.

could be the devoted son and the merry, good-humoured brother at home. Nothing but the presence of trouble in the home circle, on account of the closing of the mill, prevented the response of the others to the popular tune which, boy-like, Alf. whistled, regardless of sorrow, as he entered the hall and hung his cap up on the peg.

The other children were two boys and a girl, all under the ages of twelve years, named respectively Mabel, Harry, and Frank. Too young to be affected by any outward circumstances of trial or care, they heeded not the future so that the wants of the present moment were satisfied, and

crowded round the table, anxious for their tea.

Among them moved Mrs. Godfrey, with quiet matronly manner, reducing with gentle authority all the discordant elements of childish noise or fun into order and quietness, and ministering to their wants, as mothers know so well how to do. You could see that she was Florence's mother, by the marked resemblance between parent and child; but there was less of firmness and decision in her face than in that of her daughter, although there was a world of deep, motherly gentleness. She greeted her husband, as he came in, with a faint, quiet smile—a smile, however, which faded away very quickly, as she noticed the air of despondency which he wore.

It was no new thing now for Mr. Godfrey to be despondent, and he carried the traces of it very plainly. He was a tall, big, broad-shouldered man, over forty-five, and possessed of good business capacities. He had filled positions of trust in Messrs. Goodhugh's employ, as boy and man, for over thirty years; and the embarrassments which had now come upon the firm, in consequence of causes over which none of them had any control, had laid a burden of sorrow and care upon his shoulders. Naturally attached to the members of the firm, he felt a personal interest in its fortunes, and leaving out of the question the purely selfish anxiety which related to his own situation, he felt almost crushed in spirit, as he contemplated the ruin of what had once been one of the finest manufacturing concerns in Man-Mr. Godfrey knew more than most of the hands respecting the embarrassments of the mill-owners. Having placed confidence in him so long during the time of prosperity, they had not withdrawn that confidence now, and on ascertaining their position to be hopelessly irretrievable, they had told him all, only a day or two before. With a laudable desire to benefit their workpeople, the Messrs. Goodhugh had continued manufacturing at a great loss for some time, hoping every week that affairs would turn, and the political horizon brighten. But with all their hoping the brightness never came; and now, to crown all, by means of a defaulting firm who were deeply in their debt, they had lost an amount equal to the loss on their manufactures twice told. This circumstance had compelled them to close the mill, and though the workers hoped that the closing was only temporary, well the Messrs. Goodhugh and Mr. Godfrey knew that it was but the beginning of the end with them. No wonder, therefore, that he came forward to the tea-table, and sitting down in a dreary, listless, mechanical sort of way, commenced to sip his tea, with his thoughts the while wandering far away to other scenes and other circumstances.

"Take some toast, John," said Mrs. Godfrey, "and let me pour away the cold tea. It has been waiting so long, that I fear it will not do you much good now."

"I will take some more tea, but no toast, thank you," replied he. "I cannot eat to-night. My appetite is gone."

"Are matters hopeless at the mill?"

"I fear so. All the hands are dismissed this evening. I have had to bear the brunt of the storm with them most of the afternoon. It has been a terrible trial to talk to them in the strain I have. I have been holding out to the hands hopes which, I fear, will never be realized after all."

"What! Are the Messrs. Goodhugh so embarrassed that

you fear the future?"

"Yes, that is just it. They have been manufacturing at a loss for months, hoping things would revive; still they could have borne the expenses of that for a little time longer, and would have done so for the sake of the hands, but the Barkers' bankruptcy has put the finishing stroke to their embarrassments. Only yesterday there was hope that something would be recovered, but this morning we obtained

reliable information to the effect that all was lost. What could they do but close?"

"And the loss is very much, is it not?"

"Some tens of thousands of pounds; and added to the other losses, plunges the firm, I fear, into ruin. It will all be known in a few days, for the truth must come out now."

"Whatever will be done? What will become of all the

poor workers?"

- "I cannot think. I tried to encourage them, but they declared they should all starve together. Poor souls! it was hard work for some of them to keep body and soul together, before, what with drunken husbands and little families, and it is upon such that the lot will fall the hardest."
  - "And how did they receive the news of closing?"

"Almost with despair. I shall never forget some of the faces that were before me this afternoon. Those who felt

the most acutely said the least."

"Ah, it is generally so. I never trust sorrow that is loudly expressed. But, John," and the anxiety on the wife's face grew more painful, "how will these things affect us? Are we not without means of support too, now?"

"Yes. The position I have worked so hard to gain, for so many years past, is all gone—gone, I fear, never to return. With the fall of the firm's fortunes, mine go down too."

By this time the elder children were all listening to the conversation between their parents. Florence had been listening all too sadly before, seeing that she had been made cognizant of the impending storm; but until now, Alf., with all a schoolboy's carelessness, had flung the whole matter to the winds. That afternoon, however, the subject had been discussed in schoolboy fashion at the school, where he was a prominent scholar, and the news which had been bandied about there, somewhat to Alf.'s discomfiture, he realized now to be stern truth. And to do him justice, thoughtless, impulsive lad that he was, he now began to understand, in a dim sort of way, what it might lead to for himself. He had his own notions about "facing the world," however, boy-fashion, and in a manner, he began to realize that he should have to make a beginning.

"Father," Alf. broke in, "does that mean that I shall have to give up attending Mr. Howard's academy?"

"I fear so, my boy. Why do you ask? Does the prospect

of leaving school trouble you very much?"

"Whew! I can't say that, father; but I suppose I must go to work. The other fellows said this afternoon that I should have to come to it now. I pounded two of them for saying so, because I thought it was a lie about the mill stopping, but I didn't anticipate hearing that it was really so—so soon too."

"But how about going to work, Alf.?" said Florence. "The trouble is that there is no work to do; if it were otherwise, father would not be obliged to take you away from Mr. Howard's."

"Oh! I suppose there will be some office or other, where

I can earn my bread and cheese."

"I'm doubtful, lad," replied Mr. Godfrey. "Offices, warehouses, and mills are all pretty well in the same trouble."

Which was true indeed of Manchester, and all the Lancashire towns, just at that epoch. Warehouses were almost deserted; offices were waiting for business which never came; and speculation was almost at a standstill. Small chance was there for any lad, however willing or clever, to obtain an entrance into commercial life, when in hundreds of instances, its long standing followers were almost starving, for want of employment.

"Yes, it means ruin to us as well as to the rest," said Mr. Godfrey, as he presently turned away from the tea-table and looked thoughtfully into the fire. "Our savings will all disappear in the struggle for food, and then, for aught I can see, we shall sink into pauperism too. There's no help

for it,—none."

"Don't give way like that, John," said Mrs. Godfrey; "times may mend yet, and you may be reinstated again in your position. The darkest hour is ever before the dawn,—so I've heard them say, and it may be so with you,—with all the rest, I hope."

"But there are no signs of a cessation of civil war, and as long as that lasts we cannot get cotton at any price to pay for manufacture. The Americans seem bent only upon war and bloodshed, and unless the English recognize the South—which I hope we shall never do, even for the sake of bread—their ports will not be opened for export. Meanwhile, Egypt and India have scarcely begun the cotton culture, and the West Indies supply but a very small amount. No; I tell you, by the time the war is concluded, we shall all be paupers together, if nothing worse."

"Is the distress very prevalent, father?" said Florence.

"Yes, child, more prevalent than you think. Having had no experience of it ourselves, we cannot imagine how many thousands of our fellow-creatures are destitute of fire and food. I'll venture to say that there are at least ten thousand people in Manchester at this present time, who have not known what a full meal means for months past. Now, instead of hearing about it, we have to feel it; our turn is come now."

Hour after hour of that evening passed away thus in gloomy reflections and still gloomier anticipations. Mrs. Godfrey put the juniors to bed as usual, and, as she listened to their childish prayers, that petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," acquired a new and solemn significance in her mind. It would come to praying literally for daily bread, ere long, unless matters took a turn for the better.

### CHAPTER III.

### ALF. GODFREY'S RESOLVE.

"Ah! wonder not that, next to thee,
I love the galloping wave:
"Tis the first of coursers, bold and free,
And fit to carry the brave.
It may bear me on to a dark lee-shore,
To sink with a gallant band;
But early or late, here's a heart for my fate,
Let it come on the sea or the land.
And if the breakers kill our ship,
And your boy goes down in the foam,
Be you sure the last word on his lip,
Was a prayer for those at home."

"I SHALL go to sea, Florence, I tell you. I've always made up my mind to go, if I could get father's consent, and now I think this is a capital opportunity," said Alf. Godfrey to his sister the next morning.

"But you were talking last night of getting a place in

some office."

"So I was, but that was only for the sake of saying something. Don't you imagine that I should give up my dreams of the sea for any dingy office in England. No, no, sister mine. I shall be a sailor, if I'm anything; and just now, it will be a capital chance to get off. Father will have mouths enough to fill without mine."

"Father does not think of that, Alf., I'm sure, and you needn't. It would only pain his mind if you advanced such

a reason for going to sea."

"Tisn't likely I should be such a goose as to do anything of the kind, Florence. But you mus'n't imagine that I don't think so. Do you think it possible for a healthy, strong young fellow like me to stay mooning about at home, when everything is in such a miserable state as regards trade? No, no, I tell you; it isn't the thing, either. A girl like you may put up with it, but I can't. I want to be independent—to earn my own living."

"But you need not go to sea in order to do that," suggested Florence. "Cannot you answer advertisements of situations likely to suit you, and get out into some post in another town? Evidently there is no chance in Manchester for you, while so many hundreds of clerks are destitute; but there surely is somewhere else."

"There is no place for me anythere but on board ship," replied Alf. "I've made up my mind, and nothing shall hinder me; so you needn't try to persuade me out of it."

"But only think of the dangers of a seafaring life! Remember the awful wrecks that we read of from time to time, and the thousands of poor fellows that meet with a watery grave. How are you to know that you will not

perish in the same way?"

"Girls are always afraid of drowning," snecred Alf., with an amusing expression of contempt at his sister's fears. "A fellow can't talk of the sea but you conjure up all sorts of horrible things. Why, if sailors were to get drowned at the rate you talk of, there wouldn't be one living now. You seem to think that if I go to sea, I must of necessity be drowned."

"I don't put it down as a settled thing, but there is the chance of it," said Florence thoughtfully. "Besides this, Alf., remember that you know nothing of hardship, or hard, laborious work. You will have all this to contend with if you go to sea. A sailor's life contains more hardship than pleasure, by far."

"So you have read, and all you girls know about a sca life is by reading. I suppose those who have been to sea know best, and Charlie Capern talks differently about the matter."

"Charlie Capern; who is he?"

"Why the second mate of the Briton. He is in the mercantile navy, and sends glorious letters about the places and the things he sees to his brother Phil. Phil. is my chum at school, you know."

"And does Phil. let you see his letters?"

"Yes, because he's just as proud of his jolly sailor-brother as can be. Phil.'s going to be a sailor, too, one of these days—that is, when Charlie can get to be captain, Phil. will go under him."



"But remember, if you were to go to sea, it would not be as an officer. Common sailors fare very differently; and in the present crisis, father could not afford any money so

as to place you in the way of becoming an officer."

"I shouldn't want him to do it. Charlie Capern cost his parents no money. He just ran away to sea before he was my age—because his father and mother wouldn't agree to let him go openly—and apprenticed himself as cabin-boy. He served his time like that, and has risen by degrees to be second mate. That's just what I should do."

"What? run away?"

"No, not unless I was driven to. What I mean is, that I should rise to be an officer, after serving my apprenticeship. No, I don't want to run away; but if father or mother withhold their consent, why I shall, that's all. I'm old enough now to think what I shall like for myself, and no life would suit me like a sailor's."

Why is it that English boys have such a passion for the sea? An insular race, we seem to be devoted servants of Neptune, for from the earliest dawn of reason, English children devoutly worship the sea. Beyond and above every other profession, English lads, or a great proportion of them, The navy attracts thousands place a seafaring life. of daring and brave spirits, and the mercantile fleet offers attractions to an equally large number. With such a multitude of hardy sons, we need not fear that Britannia will ever lose the palm of supremacy over the sea. Godfrey was only a specimen of those daring, hardy, lads, who welcome danger, and long for a career of The free, open life of the ocean suits such temperaments well, while the sights and scenes of other lands offer an attractive alternative to the milder arts of our national industry. Alf. Godfrey was one of these bold, brave lads, eager, and even anxious, for anything savouring of foreign life and scenes. Had it been an expedition to the North Pole, he would have jumped at the chance of going—that is, supposing such a chance had been offered He would have been more in his element chasing Polar bears over the icebergs of the Arctic seas, than in studying Latin or Greek at Mr. Howard's academy.

"Well, don't run away, Alf," replied Florence, as she turned away with something like sorrow at Alf.'s evident obstinacy. "If you do, mother will think that her trouble is heavier than she can bear; so, by all means, go to sea in an open, honourable way. I'd advise you to speak to father or mother about it this very day."

Alf. scarcely liked to commence operations with his father, so that very evening he watched his opportunity, and coming up to Mrs. Godfrey as she was busy over her work-basket, proceeded to open the subject. It was a difficult task, however, and instinctively he felt that she would oppose it.

And so she did.

"Go to sea! Why, Alf., are you mad?" she exclaimed at the first sound of such a thing.

"No, mother, but that is what I want to do, and what I

must do."

"Nonsense, my boy; you must not think of such a thing. I cannot for one moment give my consent. Beside, what

would your father say?"

"Father will agree to it if you will," replied the boy. "It's only for you to say yes, and father will say it too. Besides, think of the state of trade now. There is no opening for me anywhere, and I must leave Mr. Howard's; it's time for me to be keeping myself. I ought to be learning something at my age."

"Father will never look at it in that light, Alf.; neither, I am sure, shall I. What, is it come to this already, that my boy must go to sea to earn a piece of bread? No, no; things

will mend by-and-by."

"But," continued Alf., finding his previous arguments of no avail, "if things do mend, I shall still want to go to sea. The long and the short of it is, mother, that I must be a sailor, whatever you say about it. It's no good to say nay; so just be a good mother for once, and give me your consent upon it. Why, you should be proud to have a sailor-son."

"No, never," replied Mrs. Godfrey with emphasis. "To have a sailor-son, as you say, would be the death of me. I should neither know peace by day, nor rest by night, for in every storm I should fancy I heard your dying shrieks. Oh,

no, Alf.; you must never expect my consent, or your father's."

"What, mother, you don't want me to run away to sea,

do you?"

"That you won't do, my son. You are much too honourable to do such a thing as that. I know I can trust you not to do that."

"But,"—and Alf. looked sadly troubled, now that he was put upon his honour—"but I can't take to quill-driving, even if trade should revive. I must have a seafaring life; I dream about it at night even, and wake up, fancying I'm aboard some gallant ship. Don't, mother—don't say nay to me."

"But I must, Alf.," and the mother's eyes streamed with tears. "Is it not enough that troubles of another kind press heavily upon us, making us full of anxiety and fear, but that you must add to them by talking of going away tosea? I could not bear that; it would be the one drop too much in my cup of sorrow. Here comes your father, and we will hear what he has to say about it," Mrs. Godfrey added, as the door opened and Mr. Godfrey walked into the room.

Had Alf. chosen his own chance, he would much have preferred telling his own story to his father alone; but as matters stood, there seemed no help for it. Without a moment's delay Mrs. Godfrey began recounting to his father the news of her son's predilections for the sea. Mr. Godfrey listened to the recital with business-like coolness, and began turning the whole matter into ridicule.

"Has Alf. been reading some silly sea stories where everything but what is real is given? That's it, I guess, and so his head is turned. He'd better be minding his books, so as to fill some useful post by-and-by, should affairs take a turn for the better."

"But, father, what man can be more useful than a sailor? What could we do without sailors? I want to do something now."

"And I am not anxious for you to do anything of the kind. You know no more of the sea than our old black cat there; in fact, you have never seen it even. Much idea you can have of a seafaring life."

"I have heard a good deal about it, father," said Alf.

"From whom, pray? Somebody as green as yourself upon the subject?"

"From Charlie Capern's letters home. Philip Capern reads them all to me, and by their means I know a great

deal more of the sea than you think I do."

"And Charlie Capern might have done better than have gone to sea. I know it nearly broke his mother's heart when he left home. Take my advice, Alf., and qualify yourself for being a good man of business by-and-by. A scafaring life would not suit you six months; and indeed, if it would, and were I ever so inclined to it, I could not afford, now, to place you in any position such as I should like you to take. And the idea of your being a common sailor-boy I could not endure. Let this suffice. Both your mother and I have sufficient trouble on our hands just now, without your increasing it, which you will do if you persist in this nonsense."

And so the subject dropped for the time being; but it was not forgotten. Time and again, whenever Alf. found an opportunity, he renewed his wishes to his mother, and emphatically told her at last that, come what would, he would go to sea. The poor woman was almost distracted. It seemed to her that all her troubles were come upon her at once. In her anguish of mind she scarcely knew what to do, and as a last resource, after debating the matter with Florence one day, determined to consult Alf.'s Sunday-school teacher, Mr. Mark Lisburne. Could she induce him to persuade Alf. out of his "fancy," as she called it, her other troubles would seem light in comparison; and she had great hopes of his success, for if anybody possessed influence over her boy, it was Mr. Lisburne.

#### CHAPTER IV.

### MR. MARK LISBURNE'S TALK.

Mr. Mark Lisburne sat in his private room—the one which, being held sacred to his own purposes both of recreation and study, was dignified with the name of sanctum—and awaited Alfred Godfrey's arrival. Lockwood, Esq., M.D., was Mr. Lisburne's uncle, and being a bachelor, had in a sense adopted Mark as his son and successor—that is, subject to certain conditions. For some two years past, Mark had resided with his uncle, and had joined him in his practice as assistant. very clever young surgeon he promised to make, and Dr. Lockwood contemplated his nephew's professional attainments with something like paternal pride. But—there is always a but in the way—but Mark was a Sunday-school teacher, while Dr. Lockwood was a rigid formalist, of the old school, and scorned Mark's new-fangled notions. the circumstances, therefore, Mark hardly dared to invite Alf. Godfrey to his home; but, as he had given his word to Mrs. Godfrey that he would do his best to dissuade her son from going to sea, he had appointed this evening for a bit of talk with the lad. And as, contrary to the experience of medical practitioners generally, who find themselves "wanted" here, there, and everywhere, just when they wish for an hour's leisure, he really had nothing to do, he felt quite at liberty to discuss the matter.

"Good evening, Alf.," said he, as the housekeeper ushered the lad into the somewhat untidy little room. "Glad to see you. Come up to the fire and warm yourself, while we

have a chat together."

Alf. was Mark's favourite scholar—if he had a favourite in the class at all. His open, generous, fearless manner commended him to the favourable notice of the young surgeon, who, however, was sensible enough not to allow the other lads to discover any trace of favouritism. Hence

there was a ring of true welcome in his words as he drew

up a chair to the fire, for his visitor.

"What is all this about going to sea, my lad?" said Mr. Lisburne. "Your mother has been telling me that you want to go to sea—to be apprenticed, in fact, as a sailor. I could scarcely believe it. Is it true?"

"Yes, sir; quite true. But I didn't think mother would

tell you of it. 'Twasn't worth while."

"Well, my boy, I happened to see your mother on Sunday, and she told me this trouble among other things. It seems that her mind is very full of trouble just now, and this not by any means the least of them. I should not have entered into the matter had you not been in my class; but considering that we sustain the relationships of teacher and scholar, I naturally felt an interest in it, and inquired still further into the meaning of such a strange resolution on your part. For it does seem a strange resolution."

"Does it, sir?" said Alf., moving uneasily in his chair.
"But why? Isn't the calling of a sailor an honourable

one?"

"Yes, perfectly so; and those who follow it deserve honour, for without their services we should be destitute of many comforts and luxuries. But what I mean is this how did *you* ever come to entertain this idea? Who put it

into your head?"

"Well, sir," replied Alf., "I always loved the sea; I liked reading about it and hearing others tell about it more than anything else. There's a schoolmate of mine at Mr. Howard's who has a sailor brother—mate of a ship—and he sends home such wonderful accounts of sea life and adventures that I'm fairly in love with the idea of going. Phil. Capern and I have made up our minds to be sailors, and nothing else."

"Not very sufficient reasons for your determination yet," replied Mr. Lisburne. "Have you no other argument to

advance as your reason for the step?"

"Well, sir, there's the state of trade," replied Alf. "You know how it is at Messrs. Goodhugh's?"

Mark Lisburne nodded.

"And at Dickson Brothers, and at Hickham and Bentley's—and indeed at nearly all the mills in the town?"

Mark nodded again.

"I should have been put into the counting-house of Messrs. Goodhugh, if it hadn't been for this; and then I suppose I must have tried to reconcile myself to a commercial life. But now that's all over, and father can't urge it upon me. I must leave Mr. Howard's, and that pretty soon; so, of course, it's my place to be looking out for myself. Father's prospects are all gone, and I have none before me; so it seems a capital opportunity, sir, for me to learn to be independent. I must earn my own living soon, and why not do it in the way that I like best, and long to try?"

"Well put and forcibly stated, my boy," returned Mr. Lisburne; "but do you know that you seem to me to be looking at the matter from a purely one-sided, selfish view?"

"Do I, sir?"

"Yes. You say, and I believe you are in earnest when you say it, that you wish to earn your own living. This is a laudable wish in any lad, at any time, but especially when anxiety or misfortune overtakes his friends, because it seems to me that it discovers the presence of that noble quality, self-help. So far, so good. I commend your desire to support yourself, seeing the stagnation which has come upon trade, and the utter ruin likely to fall upon many thousands. But then you want to accomplish this end in your own way, and in this you are utterly selfish. You choose a seafaring life, and stick to it, regardless of the feelings of mother, father, or sister. Now, do you think that is the right thing?"

Alf. did not answer at first. This was presenting the idea to him in a new light. The notion of *selfishness* had been entirely foreign to his mind, he, boy-like, imagining that it was on the side of his friends the selfishness mostly lay.

"I'm certain I do not wish to be selfish, sir. It's all the other way, because I see how matters are going at home, and I want to relieve my parents of part of their burden. Of course, I know mother will be awfully sorry, but she will get used to it. After hearing from me a few times, and knowing that I am happy and doing well, she will get reconciled."

"I doubt it, Alfred. But now, I will make you an offer. If you consent to stay at home—relinquishing all idea of a seafaring life—I will give you, at my own expense, whatever trade you like to choose. I grant you that you may not relish the idea of a commercial life, especially in the present stagnation of trade; but you may like something else. Now what shall it be—watchmaker, cabinetmaker, or anything else you would prefer? or how would you like to be apprenticed, to learn the business of stationer, or chemist?"

Alfred stared at his teacher. That Mr. Lisburne could interest himself sufficiently in his welfare to talk to him seemed likely enough; but that he should offer to be at personal expense in the matter, was quite another thing. The lad had not anticipated such an amount of interest in

his affairs as this proposition indicated.

"If anybody could persuade me out of it, sir, you could," replied he, "for your kindness almost makes me give way; but I cannot give it up. I must go to sea; it is my dream both by night and by day, and if I could have the handsomest fortune you could name for stopping at home, I'd give up the fortune to be a sailor."

"Then I cannnot tempt you, Alf., with any offer?"

"No, sir; but please, sir, don't think me ungrateful. I'm not that, only I must be a sailor. I can't help it; I suppose the liking for the sea was born with me, for ever since I was so high, I was crazy after books about ships. And even then I made up my mind to be a sailor as soon as I grew old enough. I've spoken about it at home scores of times, but, of course, while I was at school, I couldn't press it. Now, however, as things are come to the pass they are, and I'm of sufficient age, I think I can go." Alf. spoke with the decided air of one who had debated the matter in his own mind, and had arrived at a determination.

"But have you considered the dangers of the sea? You will have to undergo perils and hardships such as you have never dreamt of. You—who have not been accustomed to any work—will have to run up ropes and scrub decks barefooted, to furl sails with the wind blowing a hurricane, when you will have to hold on as with a death-grip, for very

life; and all the while do your duty by the ship, for fear of a rope's-ending. And in addition to all this, you will be exposed to the chances of shipwreck, drowning, and numberless other dangers. You may be on a raft for days together, after shipwreck, starving with cold and hunger, looking and praying for the solitary chance of a passing vessel. Have you considered all this?"

"Yes, sir, but it doesn't frighten me. You know it is not every sailor who gets shipwrecked, and I must hope for better luck. As to hardship and hard work, why, I know I shall have that to contend with, and I am quite willing to do so. If there is any chance of rising, by a steady, fearless performance of duty, I shall, sir. I've made up my mind to that."

Mr. Lisburne found that he could no more dissuade the lad from his resolution than he could bend the tree in its might, so he judiciously ceased his attempt. And although he was sorry for his mother's sake that Alf. was still so determined, he could not withhold a little spice of admiration for the lad, sceing that in his inmost heart he too loved and admired the sea. One of his boyish dreams had been that of a seafaring life, and although as time went on, and circumstances pointed to another sphere of labour, he renounced the idea, he yet retained something of his old admiration for the ocean.

"Very well, then, Alf.; as you are so evidently bent upon your plan of life, I will say no more. But I must pray for you. Let us have a word or two of prayer over it."

So they knelt down—they two, teacher and scholar—and the teacher commended his boy to the keeping of the Most High. With an anxiety which was almost parental in its intensity, Mr. Lisburne prayed that Alfred Godfrey might be kept by an Almighty power from danger and from death; that his steps might be ordered and sure; and that wherever he might be, in foreign lands, or on the raging ocean, he might never forget the great truth, that God was with him. Further, he besought the Lord that he would find out the lad with his pardoning mercy, and make him a partaker of the salvation that is by Jesus Christ. Then they rose from their knees, and as they did so Mr.

Lisburne took Alf.'s hand, and looking him full in the face said solemnly,

"My boy, remember this: Wherever you go, my prayers shall follow you. I shall never cease to pray for you."

"Thank you, sir," rejoined Alf. "I shall never forget

you nor your kindness."

So they parted, but the influence and the impressions of that hour were never forgotten by Alf. As he walked home, slowly and thoughtfully, he went over and over again in his mind all that had been said, but more especially the last words of his teacher. And the more he pondered, the more he wondered at that teacher's earnest-He could understand, and receive as a matter of course, all Mr. Lisburne's instructions and appeals in the class at the Sunday-school, but this he was not prepared It took him by surprise, and led him to think, beside affording him a convincing proof of the reality of his teacher's interest in him. He knew now, if he had never known before, that Mr. Lisburne was actuated by the sincerest motives; that he had laboured and prayed for his salvation. Was it likely he could ever forget this long earnest talk, wherever he might be? In point of fact he did not; that conversation and that prayer went with him away to sea, and many a time afterwards, amidst the roaring of the billows and the raging of the winds, he fancied he could hear the words, "My prayers shall follow you wherever you go." They were never obliterated from his memory, but remained there, fulfilling their silent mission, until his soul found peace and rest at the foot of the Cross.

# CHAPTER V.

#### ALF.'S DEPARTURE.

And many a time the storely boy Longed for the hour to come.
Which gave the hammack for his bed.
The occur for his house.

The boy stands now upon the beach, A mother s arms have present him, A sister's hand is linked in him, A father s lip hath blessed him.

The eyes that lately sparkled bright Are swellen with many a tear, The young heart feels a cheking pang To part from all so dear.

Another him, another sib, And now the struggle's o'er, He springs into the tiny boat, And pushes from the shore."

ALF. GODFREY was sobered, but not dissuaded. His dream of the sea was still his prevailing topic. Nothing else could he speak or think about, as he mingled with his companions and schoolmates, or sat in the house with his family. at last, worn out by Ali.'s reiterated entreaties, his parents gave way, and consented to his departure. It was too evident that he would never settle down to anything else. and Mr. Godfrey gave up the idea of making a commercial man of Alf., in despair. But it was a sore trial to the mother to consent to her son's adoption of a sailor life. She, with a woman's fears and a mother's anxieties, felt that going to sea was almost, if not quite, synonymous with going to his death. And Florence, poor girl, sympathized with her in her distress; between one anxiety and another it seemed as if a permanent cloud of depression and gloom had settled down over the household. But, like a true helper, she busied herself in making things look as bright as she could; and, taking into consideration the fact that they were about to dispense with the services of their capable maid-of-all-work, assumed, little by little, the bulk of domestic duties, to which hitherto she had been almost a

stranger.

So the time went on for a fortnight or three weeks, and Christmas drew near. Charlie Capern was expected home somewhere about Christmas, from a long voyage made to southern latitudes, and Alf. anxiously looked for his coming, hoping to obtain through his influence, a berth in a vessel of the same line. Meanwhile, Mr. Howard's school had "broken up" for the holidays, and Alf. had bidden scholastic pursuits farewell for ever. With boy-like pride he trumpeted the story of his destination among his companions, to the surprise of some and the envy of not a few others, who were agreed with him in admiring a seafaring life. This latter class esteemed Alf. very fortunate, and would have given anything to have had permission to choose the same line of life.

Christmas at last dawned upon the city of Manchester, and its joy-bells pealed forth a clanging, merry welcome to the ever-blessed season. Few hearts, however, were there among that vast working population who bestowed a welcome upon its advent, or viewed it with anything but gloomy anxiety. The civil war was raging fiercely in the United States; commerce was almost at a stand-still between England and America; and to all appearance the coming year would witness tenfold more misery, pecuniary embarrassment, and destitution even than the past year had seen. All England throbbed with one vast impulse of charity, and subscriptions poured in from every quarter in order to alleviate the distress and feed the starving. In place of Christmas rejoicings and New Year's welcomes, were to be heard the wail of the hungry, the naked, and the fireless; while Christian philanthropy busied itself with united and ceaseless efforts to stem the daily-increasing torrent of famine and destitution. Many thousands of persons among the workingclasses of the country denied themselves of some accustomed luxury that Christmas-day, in order to contribute the extra mite thus saved, to the fund which was the outcome of the nation's generosity.

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The Godfreys were among those who passed over Christmas-day with saddened and yet with thankful hearts. Saddened enough they were, because of many things; but thankful that matters were with them, personally, no worse. They were not starving, as too many of their neighbours were—they were not even without a little money, on which to fall back in this emergency; but a few months, at least, would exhaust that, and then they would be as poor as the rest. Alf.'s determination, too, was a trouble to them, for their consent to his departure was only wrung from them unwillingly and against their better judgment. Amidst it all, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey felt that they had quite a heavy load to bear.

Charlie Capern's ship had been delayed by contrary winds, so that it had not reached Liverpool by Christmasday as anticipated, but while the New Year was yet very young, Phil. rushed into Mr. Godfrey's hall one morning, in a state of uproarious exultation, exhibiting a letter which had just come to hand addressed to himself, and containing a few lines hurriedly scrawled over, stating that the sailor would be at home within three days.

"Hurrah, Alf.!" shouted the lad; "here's news for us all; Charlie's coming home at last, and he'll find a berth for us both. I told you so!"

"I wonder if he'll be able to get me a berth in the Briton?" said Alf., as he perused the letter which Phil. had brought; "I'd like to go out with somebody I knew—the first voyage, and all."

"Very likely. He'll do what he can, at any rate; and I'm in hopes that my father will see his way clear to come to the same sensible determination that yours has. I long for the time to be off to sea."

"Well, I'm going," said Alf., "as soon as I can get a good berth. I'm only waiting for your Charlie to come home, and for this rough wintay weather to break up. Of course it wouldn't be pleasant for a fellow to get much tossing about to begin with, and mother wouldn't have a bit of peace; you know what mothers are?"

"Of course I do. There's mine at home, thinking that Charlie is going to the bottom every bit of wind that

blows; and now you see he's almost back again, safe and sound. I believe I should have been out at sea before this time if it hadn't been for mother's nervousness. Oh! don't I wish I were you, with my governor's consent gained and all settled."

"Yes; but, Phil., it goes against the grain, I can see that. Father and mother have only agreed to my going because I wouldn't settle to anything else. I can see that it's a worry to them; so that's why I'd rather be with somebody I knew—I fancy mother would be more satisfied."

At this moment Florence came through the hall, and seeing the two lads deep in the discussion of these scafaring

items, stopped and spoke.

"What are you two boys so deeply engaged about? is

your brother come home, Phil.?"

"Not home to us, Miss Godfrey, but he's in Liverpool; and as soon as he can leave his ship he'll be here, he says. I thought Alf. would like to know, so I just ran over with the news."

"What in the world can you lads see in a sailor's life to make you so anxious after it?" said Florence. "Here, now, is Alf., whom we are all so proud of, and who seemed likely to grow up in father's steps, putting up his mind to leave us all, and adopt the sea. Can't I persuade you to stop at home, Alf.?" she said, coming closer to him, and speaking in words of tender entreaty.

"No, Florence," said Alf. "You are a dear good sister, and I love you dearly; also, I know that none of our fellows have a better home than I have; but for all that the sea is my choice. If you only knew how I look and long for the day to feel myself upon the broad blue ocean, you

would never try to stop me.'

Florence signed and went on, while Alf. and Phil. looked after her with boyish admiration. Her quiet, obliging, truthful ways had rendered her a favourite with all of Alf.'s school-fellows who were on visiting terms at his home; and many a time had she solved a difficult question in grammar, or corrected a faulty composition, both for him and them. Philip Capern had experienced the benefit of her assistance on more occasions than one, for, with his

natural heedlessness, he rarely succeeded in constructing five consecutive sentences without some glaring errors in grammar, orthography, or composition. If any one could have had influence with the lads, I think it would have been Florence.

Charlie Capern arrived in due course at his home, and, I need not say, many were the rejoicings over him by his friends and relatives. He had developed into a strong, stalwart young fellow, contrasting with the young fellows of his age, who were labouring in Manchester, in a most marked manner. Sea-life and bracing sea-air had given muscle to his limbs and colour to his cheeks, and his parents were exceedingly gratified at his appearance. Sailor-like, he was full of tales of foreign countries and foreign life—tales to which Alf. Godfrey and Phil. Capern listened with delighted eagerness.

It was not long before Alf. Godfrey's anxiety was removed on the score of a berth. Charlie Capern, on being made acquainted with the state of affairs, very quickly interested himself in the matter, and set on foot inquiries as to a ship for Alf. There was no vacancy, however, on board the Briton, and further, she would not sail for a month or two, as, in consequence of knocking about during her voyage home, she had to be laid up in dock for repairs. But an apprentice was wanted on board the Neptune, another ship belonging to the same firm, and in this vessel an opening existed for a steady, well-behaved lad. As Mr. Godfrey steadily refused to expend one farthing more than was imperatively needful on the affair, this scemed to be the only opportunity, and accordingly, acting on Charlie Capern's advice, the berth was secured. Mr. Godfrey himself wrote to the firm in relation to the matter, and all preliminaries being settled, took Alf. to Liverpool, to complete the contract of signing the indentures which bound him to the captain for five years, to learn the art and mystery of seamanship. It was with a sad heart that Mrs. Godfrey bade her son "farewell." Florence, too, had not said "good-bye" before the bitter tears came welling up as she turned away to weep. Alf. was as brave as could

be expected,—braver even, although for one five minutes he

did break down, and, rubbing his eyes vigorously with the cuff of his jacket, choked back the sobs that were fast

rising to the surface.

So the first gap was made in the Godfrey household. Once in the great mercantile port, however, Alf. passed off his trouble, and entered enthusiastically into the spirit of the scene. The Neptune was a noble merchantman, bound to the west coast of South America. From the time of her departure until her return, it would be something like twelve or fourteen months—a long period for a young lad to start with. As the owners told Mr. Godfrey this, he paused, and turned round to Alf.

"Do you hear that, Alf.? Twelve or fourteen months out? Why, it would be a long voyage for an old hand, to say nothing of you. I would greatly prefer a shorter

voyage at first."

"Our ships mostly trade to South America," said the clerk. "We do most of our business with the ports on the

west coast there.

"Well, father," put in Alf.; "I must become used to it, and I may as well be broken in thoroughly, first as last. I can't have my choice in the matter, you know, or else I should have preferred to go in the vessel of which Charlie Capern is mate."

"Ay, true," returned Mr. Godfrey; "well, as it's for you

to accept, will you sign the indentures or not?"

"Yes, father. The sooner it's over the better;" and Alf. settled the matter in his old impetuous style. The clerk smiled as he saw it done, and thought to himself how a few years' experience of the sea would curb that bold, untamed

spirit.

It was only two days after this that Alf. went on board the *Neptune*. Mr. Godfrey accompanied his son on board, and saw with pleasure that every arrangement was made for the comfort of the hands which was possible. After helping to stow away his son's chest, and giving him a few words of parting counsel, Mr. Godfrey came away. They sailed that day with the tide, and as the vessel glided out of the river Mr. Godfrey's heart waxed sorer than ever. It seemed very hard,—this first parting.

# CHAPTER VI.

#### SHALL IT BE FLORENCE OR NOT?

"The primal duties shine aloft, like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers;
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high and not for low, for proudly graced
And not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace."—W. Wordsworth.

"Good afternoon, Miss Godfrey; I may see you home, may I not?" said the pleasant voice of Mr. Mark Lisburne one fine frosty afternoon, two or three weeks subsequent to the conversation we have recorded in the last chapter.

"Thank you," replied Florence Godfrey with a somewhat embarrassed look, of which, however, Mark took no notice

as he escorted her on the way to her house.

"It seems good to see you again out of doors, Florence," said he. "I was afraid that troublesome cough of yours might have kept you a prisoner for some weeks longer. I could scarcely believe my own eyes when I saw you in school."

"It is much better now, thank you; but still father was

almost afraid that my coming out would renew it."

"Ah! by the way, have you heard of Alf. and his doings yet? I have only seen Mr. Godfrey once since your brother went off."

"The Neptune was spoken with going down Channel a few days after she set sail, and in addition we received a few lines from Alf., written while they put into harbour. He was quite well then, although he had had a little experience of sea-sickness."

"Yes, of course. Being a new hand, and unaccustomed to salt-water, he would be certain to get broken in to sealife rather more forcibly than agreeably. But sea-sickness does not hurt a healthy young lad like Alf. He will find the benefit afterwards. We shall have him coming home

one of these days a robust, hardy Jack Tar, the very beauideal of a sailor. But, by the way, Florence, I wanted to ask you if matters were wearing any brighter aspect at Messrs. Goodhugh's? Do they intend moving again?"

"No, I fear not. Father says there is no prospect of any revival of trade there. You know, perhaps, that they are embarrassed? They lost so much by carrying on the mill while the high price of raw cotton prevented them from making any profits."

"I am sorry to hear that. I had heard whispers of the kind before, but was not certain if they were correct. And

Mr. Godfrey, I suppose, is still very unsettled?"

"Yes, very. We are all in a most unsettled state of mind. Between one thing and another, poor mamma has more than she can bear." Florence spoke sadly, because she felt so. Young as she was, the shadow of life's woes had fallen upon her, and she was learning to bear in part the anxieties of her parents. Her companion read all this at a glance, and longed to be able to comfort her heart. was the sympathy of affection, for, if the truth must be told, Mark Lisburne loved Florence Godfrey. He had been first drawn towards her by her modest and unassuming manner at the Sunday-school. Florence had attended there for many years, and though nominally in the Bible-class, had for some months taken a share in the teaching, whenever any of the junior teachers were absent. Mark had been first impressed by her there, had since accidentally met with her at the house of some mutual friends, and had improved the opportunities for becoming acquainted. And now, recently, in his capacity of teacher to Alf. Godfrey, he had visited Mr. Godfrey's family occasionally, ostensibly to see after Alf., but really to know and see more of Florence. All unconsciously to herself, Florence had taken hold of the young man's heart, and fixed an impression there never to be obliterated. She herself was somewhat shy and retiring, never dreaming that she could attract anybody's love. her nature she more resembled the modest violet than the blooming rose, and when Mr. Lisburne began to show his appreciation of her charms, she was astonished that anyone should see anything in her to admire. But so it is; very often the violet, hiding in lowly obscurity, is plucked and placed in the post of honour, while gaudier flowers are overlooked and forgotten. Mr. Lisburne had spoken to Mr. Godfrey once or twice with reference to his sentiments and feelings with regard to Florence; but that gentleman, with a cautious surmise that the attachment might not be agreeable to Mr. Lockwood, and a very natural feeling of reluctance against permitting his daughter to be despised, or blamed in any way by the old gentleman, held He would not give consent to any aloof from the matter. attachment or friendship subsisting between Mr. Lisburne and Florence; while as for Florence, she seemed, with a feeling of womanly pride and reserve, to hold aloof more than any one else from the proffered friendship. Still, Mark persevered and improved his opportunities of acquaintance, resolving with all a young man's ardour that nothing should separate him and his beloved. But it was only seldom that he could see Florence, now that Alf. was gone. He could call before, frequently, on a visit to Alf., as one of his boys; but now, this pretence being cut off, he could only meet with Florence at the Sunday-school, and whenever it was possible he escorted her home.

But some mischief-making tongue had conveyed the intelligence to Mr. Lockwood that Mark was paying his addresses to Florence Godfrey. The busybody had nothing to say against Florence or her family, Mr. Godfrey being known to be a highly respectable man, and his worldly circumstances fair-at least, they were so until the closing of Messrs. Goodhugh's mill. But this was not much to the purpose, according to Mr. Lockwood's idea of things. had mapped out Mark's plan in life after his own notions, and could he have had his way he would have allied his nephew to wealth, honour, and beauty. That Florence was not a "lady," in the conventional sense of the term, that she was not wealthy, and that she came not of a high family, were all offences of about equal magnitude in his eyes. Mark little guessed what a tempest of wrath was about to explode upon his head as he wended his way home that afternoon, after accompanying Florence to the door of her father's house.

"I wish you would give me the privilege of helping to share your troubles, Florence," said Mark, as they halted at the entrance to the little villa for the last lingering goodbyes. "If your father would only consent to my addresses,

I could often spend an hour or two at your house."

"That cannot be, Mr. Lisburne," replied Florence. "For many reasons my father will never, I think, consent to it. And, beside all these, there are now other reasons added why we cannot be engaged. The present state of trade and our unsettled prospects would make such a connection very undesirable."

"Why so, dear Florence?"

"Because, unless a prospect soon opens, father will leave Manchester. He will never stay here until poverty comes upon us like an armed man."

"Where do you think he would go?"

"Emigration seems to attract his mind. He would invest his capital in farming. You may know, perhaps, that father was bred on a farm, his father being a farmer in the south of England, and so he knows something about it."

"Yes, I have heard Mr. Godfrey mention it; but were you to emigrate, Florence, I could not give you up. I

should come after you."

"No, no, that could not be. It is best for us both, considering all things, to keep from any engagement or promise to each other. Still, Mr. Lisburne, I cannot but regard you as a friend, and a true one."

"Then you do think of me as a true friend? Nothing more?" said the young man, while a look of disappointment

stole over his face.

"Nothing more, Mr. Lisburne. It would be folly to think of anything else under present circumstances. Goodbye," and, shaking hands, Florence closed the conversation.

"Good-bye, then, but I can wait," said he, as he re-echoed his farewells, and turning away he was soon retracing his

steps towards his uncle's house.

Tea was waiting by the time Mark reached his home, for Mr. Lockwood, with all the rigid preciseness of a follower of the old school, insisted on keeping the early simple hours of his ancestors, and to these habits he attributed much of



his present good health. Mr. Lockwood had known of the acquaintanceship between his nephew and Florence, for two or three days past, but had nursed his wrath until a fitting opportunity appeared for expending it. That opportunity seemed now to have arrived, and he proceeded to open the vials of anger upon Mark's unsuspecting head.

"So, Mr. Mark Lisburne, I have found out the precise nature of the attraction which calls you to these wonderful Sabbath-school duties of yours, week by week," was the old gentleman's first angry greeting. "It seems that there is a

lady in the case."

"A lady, sir!" said Mark, overcome with confusion.

"Yes, a lady. Some middle-class girl or other, to whom I give the title of lady, only as a matter of form. And so you not only dare me with reference to teaching those ragamuffins, but you deceive me, or endeavour to do so, in the matter of this engagement. But you need not think that such things can go undiscovered. I was informed of the affair, sir, some days ago, by a true friend."

"There is no engagement existing at present, uncle," replied Mark, "between Miss Godfrey and myself. Her friends will not consent to it, and she herself avoids the

idea of the thing."

"And much to their credit, whoever they are. They acknowledge tacitly, by so refusing, that she is not a fit

match for a gentleman."

"Miss Godfrey, sir, is a fit match for any gentleman in the land, only her modesty will not allow her to own it," burst out Mark. "I shall never consent to resign her while

there is the least hope of winning her!"

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Lockwood coolly, as he balanced his cup of tea midway between the saucer and his mouth; "then you will have to consider the other side of the question. Between one thing and another, I have almost determined to disinherit you. It will need but a very little more provocation to decide me as to the matter."

"Do it, sir, do it, by all means," rejoined Mark, out of all patience with the bondage in which he was so persistently kept. "You thwart me at every turn. You persist in trying to fetter me—both mind and body. I cannot call

my most conscientious convictions my own, because of your tyrannical spirit, and I cannot endure it much longer."

"Well, I warn you," replied Mr. Lockwood. "It seems to me that the girl's friends have sense, or I should say more on the matter. I trust you will have discretion enough to take up with a new acquaintance, at some future time, and one more suited to your own sphere in life. Meanwhile we will drop the subject."

Mr. Lockwood always drew out of conflicts in this manner when Mark asserted his own independence. However much he threatened to disinherit his nephew, it would really have been the greatest trial of his life to have done so. Mark occupied the place of child to him, and nothing but the most obstinate provocation on the young man's part, would really induce him to put his threats into execution. But this last offence of Mark's was verging on the list of unpardonables.

#### CHAPTER VIL

#### SUFFERING IN SILENCE,

"Who is my neighbour? He whom thou Hast power to aid and bless."

As I told you in my last, Florence was mostly engaged in teaching at the Sunday-school, but notwithstanding, she still kept up her connection with the young women's class, and her old teacher, Miss Brookland. Miss Brookland was an elderly maiden lady, of ample means and a liberal heart—a friend as well as teacher to all her girls. It was no uncommon thing for Florence to spend an hour at her home, and she never did this without carrying away with her pleasant and strengthening remembrances.

The domestic atmosphere was dark and depressed at home. Mrs. Godfrey fretted and mourned over Alf., while

Mr. Godfrey made fruitless journeys into the city, almost daily, to see if commercial affairs were brightening. This, however, was not the case, but the contrary; matters abroad were more dark and threatening, and speculation had become almost nil, while the destitution was becoming greater and greater every day. To add to all this, it was the depth of winter, and sorrows that might have been bearable with a warmer atmosphere and brighter skies, now seemed absolutely overpowering. Day by day Mr. Godfrey returned from his quest, weary, disheartened, and sad, and everything at home seemed to share in his gloom. Under the circumstances it was not wonderful that Florence should seek to escape somewhere for a little encouragement and brightness. Indeed it seemed to her that if she did not get the strength which comes from human sympathy, she could not bear up. So having a couple of hours to spare one evening, just at this juncture, she betook herself to her teacher's residence.

"I am glad to see you, Florence, very glad," was Miss Brookland's greeting. "I did not think you had forgotten me, but still, it seems a long time since I saw you last."

"Does it, Miss Brookland?" said Florence. "I have not been able to get here of late, we have had so many things to think of. But I have sorely missed our quiet talks together. Life seems to have grown so dark, so dreary, of late, and the burden seems too heavy to be borne."

"Does it, my poor child? You are only experiencing the common lot. And your life would be an exception indeed, if you did not have some dark days. Do you remember

what Longfellow says?—

"'Be still, sad heart, and cease repining, Behind the clouds the sun is shining. Thy fate is the common fate of all; Into each life some rain must fall, Some days be dark and dreary.'

And a greater than Longfellow has said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' But the assurance is added, 'in Me ye shall have peace.' You do not forget that, surely, Florence?"

"No, Miss Brookland; but somehow, I cannot realize it. And as if the present perplexities of trade were not enough

to worry my parents, they have had another worry. My brother Alfred has got them to consent to his going to sea, though sorely against their will, and this has seemed like the last straw, which, it is said, 'breaks the camel's back.'"

"And is he really gone?"

"Oh! yes. By this time the vessel is tossing in the Atlantic."

"Indeed! Then I do not wonder that you have heaviness and grief at home. I was so grieved to hear of the closing of Messrs. Goodhugh's mill, too. Is there no

prospect yet of their reopening?"

"None, Miss Brookland; they are too deeply involved on account of their previous losses. Father thinks that the very idea of their resuming business is hopeless, and he knows pretty well, as they have told him how they stand."

"I am sorry to hear this. The poor workpeople will

suffer severely."

"They are suffering. Many were half-starving before, and now the destitution will be complete. For ourselves, we do not know want, but father is determined not to go on losing all he has gained. He thinks of emigrating if

affairs do not improve.

"It is well, Florence, that you are at present situated above want. I could take you to many houses where the inmates are literally depending upon charity to keep body and soul together. When I visit them I seem overwhelmed with the burden of it, so that I can enter into your feelings. All who have quick sympathies feel the weight of others' burdens, more or less."

"But why is it, Miss Brookland,—why is it permitted? I mean, if God is so good and fatherly, as you tell us, why does he permit so much suffering upon the earth, when by

one word He could alter all of it?"

"Until I can understand God's secret purposes and plans, I cannot tell you the why and wherefore of his dealings with the children of men. You are not the first who has put up this agonizing question. Job said, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me;' and from all nature goes up the sometimes scarcely articulate cry, 'What is the reason of thy dealings?'"

"But the Bible tells us that 'God is love.'"

"And so He is. Because He is love He so orders and arranges all these contrary dispensations—whether affecting nations or individuals—that they turn out to be for the best. Above all the din, and noise, and confusion of these earthly troubles, our Father rules, and when the people have learnt the lessons He designs to teach them, He will remove the discipline."

"But, Miss Brookland, remember the thousands of aged ones, little children, and invalids, who are suffering now by

no fault of their own."

"I do. They are suffering because of the sin of slavery, not because of their own sin. The commercial life of this nation and the American, is so interwoven that it was not possible for them to do evil without involving innocent thousands in the suffering. But the wide-spread philanthropy which is existing alongside with the destitution of our fellow-creatures, is one proof that God will not permit the misery to exist unrelieved. When you came in I had just made up my mind to visit Maggie Selwyn. You remember Maggie, of course?"

"That thin, pale-faced girl who recently lost her father?"

"The same. You know she has been the sole support of her widowed mother and little sister since her father's death. I have succeeded in dragging a few particulars of their circumstances from her of late, and from what I have heard I conclude that they have suffered greatly. But the last two Sundays Maggie has been missing, and I fear that they are getting lower and lower in circumstances. Have you any objection to go with me to Maggie's home?"

"Oh, no! I should be very glad to go," was Florence's

reply.

"I would not disturb our chat, but that something tells me that Maggie is in need of comfort. She has been on

my mind very much all the day."

So saying, Miss Brookland started for Maggie's home, and with her, Florence. Threading their way through the poorer part of Manchester, they soon reached Tasker's Lane, the locality where Maggie lived. It was not an inviting part of the city; but the poor cannot choose their habitations;

they must live in dwellings suited to their means. Miss Brookland appeared to be pretty well acquainted with the locality, for she went up to Maggie's house and knocked at once for admission.

"Come in, please," said a female voice from the inside.

Opening the door, Miss Brookland and Florence obeyed the summons and went inside. But here a difficulty presented itself; there was not a glimmer of light nor a spark of fire to be seen, and Florence hesitated to proceed.

"But how is this?" said Miss Brookland. "I cannot see you, nor make out where I am. Have you no light?"

"Not a bit of candle or coal, teacher," said Maggie's voice, "or else I would soon get you a light. Let me guide you, teacher—this way, please," and Maggie groped her way forward in order to pilot her teacher to a seat.

"Wait a bit, Maggie," said Miss Brookland; "I'm afraid we sha'n't be able to get on well in the dark, and beside, I have a companion with me. Suppose you take this sixpence and get some candles, first. Who is here beside you?"

"Only mother; Nellie is in bed," said Maggie, as she took the coin in the dark from her teacher's hand. "If you'll be kind enough to wait for one five minutes, teacher, I'll be back with a light;" and the girl darted off.

The five minutes quickly passed by, filled up as it was by apologies and thanks from Mrs. Selwyn, who was evidently very nervous at the fact of her visitors being compelled to wait so long before they could be properly accommodated; but Maggie allowed no grass to grow under her feet, and quickly returned with a burning candle, which shed at least a cheerful glimmer of light over the poor little room which was home to the Selwyns.

"Now we can see each other's faces," said Miss Brookland; "we can talk. Maggie, this is one of our class, you know—no stranger;" and she pointed to Florence. "You have not been to school for the past fortnight. What is the reason?"

Maggie blushed, and cast her eyes on the ground in silence; but her mother spoke for her.

"Sure, Miss Brookland, it isn't Maggie's fault that she hasn't been to school. The reason is that she was obliged

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to pawn her Sunday clothes to keep us from starving with cold. And now the bit of coal is almost done, for the pawnbroker is so full of pledges that he doesn't care about taking any more. We're sitting without any fire this evening, to spare a bit for to-morrow; but when that is done I don't know where we are to go for more."

"And how do you get on for food? I don't ask in a spirit

of idle curiosity," said Miss Brookland.

"We get our allowance from the soup committee, and small as it is, it keeps us from clemming altogether. Then twice a week we get a little bread, that is all." There was a tone of dejected despair about the woman's utterances, as if she had sounded all the depths of destitution, and had arrived at the conclusion that she could not possibly sink deeper. Mind and body seemed crushed under the bitter load of poverty. Miss Brookland thought it was no wonder that Maggie's face wore a deeper look of pallor and emaciation.

"And is that absolutely all the relief you get?"

"Yes, miss. There be those that gets more. They runs from pillar to post, telling a pitiful tale, and begs of everybody, but Maggie nor I can't do it. We've always been accustomed to earn our bread afore we eat it, and begging goes against the grain, uncommon hard."

"Maggie, did you not know that there was a relief fund established in connection with our chapel and school?"

inquired Miss Brookland.

"No, teacher, I have not been out much of late, except to the pawnbroker's. I have not seen one of my classmates since I was last at the class."

"Then that accounts for your not knowing it. It has only been established during the past three weeks. We give soup, coals, and bread, twice a week, to all in the Sabbath-school, or congregation, who can prove that they are in need of relief. As I see you are of the class for whom this relief was intended, I will give you a ticket which will enable you to receive this help as long as you need it. You needn't be timid of coming, Maggie," added Miss Brookland in a kindly tone of encouragement; "I sometimes assist in the distribution. I shall, to-morrow, if all be well."

"Thank you, teacher," replied Maggie, bursting into

tears; "I will come gladly to-morrow."

"And now, child, about your Sunday clothes. You must have them out of pawn. I cannot allow you to miss coming with us for lack of clothes. You may gain comfort and strength in God's house, but you certainly will not, away from it. What is the amount you need to take them out of pawn?"

Maggie named the sum. It seemed ridiculously small compared with the value of the things to her—bonnet, shawl, and dress; but that was accounted for by the fact that the pawnshops were so full of pledges, that the pawn-

brokers scarcely cared to take them at any price.

"Here it is, then. Now, be sure to take out your clothes on the morrow; and also come to the relief distribution. Come to me with your ticket and I will see that you are soon supplied."

After some more words of comfort on Miss Brookland's part, and many words of thanks on the part of Maggie and her mother, Miss Brookland and Florence left, promising to

call again very soon.

"There, Florence," said Miss Brookland as they passed along, "if we will only come out to seek it, we may find instance upon instance of suffering greater than anything we have to bear; and in helping others we may materially lighten our own burden."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHICH WILL GIVE WAY?

FLORENCE came away from Maggie Selwyn's with different feelings from those with which she went there. She had heard much of the want and misery of the mill-hands, but this was her first actual knowledge of them; and it is surprising how differently one regards these things when brought into actual contact with them. To Miss Brookland it was nothing new. She had become familiar with want and destitution of late, and the capabilities of her generous purse were strained to the utmost in her constant endeavours to relieve the sick and the needy among whom she visited. Florence had had no experience of actual want; as yet all the troubles of her home were concerning other matters. Godfrey's blighted prospects and Alf.'s departure had furnished food enough for sorrow, without literal lack of daily bread. But still the Godfreys had denied themselves of certain luxuries and comforts to which they had formerly been accustomed; and since the dismissal of the servant girl, they had done so more determinedly, knowing that at no very distant season they themselves must be made acquainted with stint, and even, perchance, with want. But Florence's heart was full that night, as she went home after bidding Miss Brookland "good-bye." She had no money of her own, having expended her allowance of pocket-money, and she could not ask her parents for means wherewith to help Maggie. But still the thought of a fellow-scholar suffering silently, but keenly, the pangs of want, made her long intensely to be able to relieve those pangs. Long and earnestly she pondered over the matter that night, and before morning some good angel had put a thought into her head.

Next morning, Florence and her mother were sitting together at work. Now was the favourable opportunity for

airing her plan.

"Mother," said Florence, "I have been thinking of Maggie Selwyn and her mother nearly all night. The thought of their sufferings, which I found, too, were only a sample of thousands of others, made me so miserable that I scarcely knew what to do. How I wish it were possible to help them a little!"

"I wish it were, dear," said Mrs. Godfrey; "but you know it is not. We have not a shilling to spare in the shape of charity, for every pound expended here on neces-

saries, for the household, leaves that the less."

"Yes, mother, I know," returned Florence; "but still I think I see a way of rendering some little help without hurting you. Will you consent to my trying it?"

"I will, if it be at all feasible. But you must tell me first, before I can decide."

"My plan is this: I will go without my tea every day, and give the food to Maggie when you think that a loaf is due to me—if you will consent, mother?"

"But, my child, will not your health suffer? You are not very strong, and a deficiency of food will soon tell upon

your constitution."

"But, mother, I have plenty of food at my other meals! Just think; it will only be taking three instead of four meals a day, and surely that will not hurt me. What should I do if I were in the places of thousands of others in this city, glad even to get one meal a day?"

"True—true," replied Mrs. Godfrey. "Let us be thankful that you are not. And I hope you never will be reduced to it. Well, if you very much wish it, and feel quite willing to undergo the deprivation, I will not object. I think we could by that means give Maggie a loaf of bread weekly."

"Oh! thank you, mother," returned Florence. "I shall be only too glad to do it. Only there is one thing—I would rather that Maggie knew nothing of my sacrifice

for her."

"That can be as you like," replied Mrs. Godfrey. "I shall not interfere;" and so it was settled. Week by week thereafter, Maggie duly received her loaf from Florence, who not unfrequently conveyed it to the poor but clean little home with her own hands. It would be hard to say which afforded most comfort to the Selwyns—her loaf, or her loving sympathy; and it would be quite as hard to say which was more blest, the giver or the receiver. At any rate, Florence learnt the meaning of those words, as she never knew them before: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Meanwhile, we must see how affairs progressed with Mark. His uncle continued greatly incensed with him on account of his independence of thought and action, and entertained all sorts of bitter intentions against him, should he still continue obdurate. These thoughts and intentions were in no way toned down by Mr. Lockwood's advisers, seeing that some among them were downright enemies of

Mark's. As you know, his connection with the Sabbath-school was one grave cause of offence; but another, and a graver, was the acquaintanceship with Florence Godfrey. Mr. Lockwood having ascertained from indisputable authority that Mark still continued on friendly terms with Florence, determined to make one last bold effort to "turn Mark from his foolishness," as he phrased it, and deciding to proceed to extremities if that effort did not succeed, he commenced the attack.

Mark was looking over the daily paper one evening after supper. He occupied a chair at one side of the fire, and his uncle one on the other.

"Mark," commenced the old gentleman, "have you seriously considered what I said to you the other day about your connections?"

"What particular connections, uncle?" inquired Mark, looking up rather innocently from the perusal of his paper.

"Surely you cannot have forgotten—the Sunday-school, and the young person you met with there."

"Oh!" returned Mark. "Why, no, I cannot say that I have."

"I thought as much, because I have been given to understand that you still continue your attendance in the one case, and your attentions in the other."

"And pray, have you anyone mean enough to be employed as spy upon my actions?" asked Mark, his young

blood hot with indignation.

"No. I have no spy in my employment. I believe you know me well enough to understand that I should never employ spies. But friends—friends of yours—have informed me of late of your doings; and, in my opinion, whatever you may think, they have done a most friendly thing. They, with myself, are most anxious to save you from disgrace, and urge me to use all my influence to prevent it!"

"Uncle," said Mark, amazed, "you speak as if I had taken up the *rôle* of a scapegrace, and were bringing shame upon your gray hairs, as well as clouding my own name with dishonour. But as I am doing neither the one nor the

other I am at a loss to understand your meaning."

"Indeed! Then it is necessary for me to speak more

plainly. You will remember that I told you the other day that I insisted on your relinquishing your teaching engagement at that low school, and also giving up at once, and for ever, all acquaintance with that young person who has

entrapped your affections."

"Miss Godfrey has not entrapped my affections," emphatically cried Mark. "Please to understand that, uncle, at once, and fully. It is I who have sought Miss Godfrey, not she who sought me. She would avoid me even now, and persistently refuse even the commonest signs of friendship, were she left to her own choice. Never blame Miss

Godfrey in the matter."

"It is all very well for you to say this, because you view her with the eyes of an admirer; but people who have lived longer in the world than you have, view these things differently. A young man is frequently entrapped, when he imagines that he walks into love with his eyes and ears open. You may imagine this—in fact, I daresay you do; but it does not alter the case. Looking at this preference for Miss Godfrey as one result of your connection with the school, I am determined to put my veto upon both. Henceforth you must give up both, or give up me; I shall permit no half-way measures."

"Are you in earnest, uncle?" asked Mark.

"Yes; I was never more so. These things will be bones of contention between us as long as they remain unaltered,

and I am determined they shall not so remain."

"Well, I suppose you have a perfect right to exact a certain amount of compliance with your views from every one under your roof. But, uncle, as I cannot give this, I shall seek liberty of thought and action elsewhere."

"It is well that you have made up your mind to this step," returned Mr. Lockwood, "as it saves me the trouble of placing it before you. You must comply with my wishes

or leave my house. That is the only alternative."

"I accept the alternative," said Mark. "I do not mind leaving your house, because I cannot have my mind fettered like a child's, or a slave's——"

"But," interrupted Mr. Lockwood, "hear me out. This leaving my house involves more than that. You give up,

by so doing, your connection with my practice, and your

interest in my will. Think the matter well over."

"Uncle," said Mark, "I have thought of it till I am tired. You think to bind your fetters on my conscience all the more firmly because they are golden ones. But a strong young fellow like me, who has a willing heart, a clear head, and a good profession withal, need never fear of earning his own bread and cheese."

"And pray, sir, who gave you this profession? Just

answer me that."

"I have no objection to do that, uncle. You did. It is by your kindness that I have reached my present position, and I thank you for it."

"Very well. Now, do you think that you are doing

your duty toward me in acting as you do?"

"I am not conscious of any dereliction of duty, uncle. The benefits you have conferred upon me—and they are many—do not make you lord of my conscience. I claim liberty of mind and action as my birthright, and if you do not grant it, uncle, I shall still claim it. I am grown now to years of discretion, and can surely decide for myself."

"Very well; be it so. I have fairly placed the alternative before you, remember, and you can blame no one if you walk out on the wide world penniless and friendless, because of your own decision. But as youth is apt to be impulsive and inconsiderate, I will not take your decision now. You had better sleep upon it, Mark, and then I shall know that you are really in earnest. Only remember this, that whichever way you decide, it will be final. If you are determined, so am I; and once my will is altered against you, I shall never undo the deed."

"I respect your kindness so far as it goes," responded Mark, "but it will have no influence in altering my sentiments. I shall think and speak just the same to-morrow or next week."

"Well, well, we shall see," said the old gentleman, with a return of his old testy manner. "Meanwhile, I shall allow the subject to remain in abeyance."

As you may expect, Mark was now brought face to face with the matter in its most serious light. There was no

room for mistaking his uncle's mind in reference to it; he would be obeyed, or Mark must take the consequences. And on calm reflection, he felt prepared to take the consequences. He determined neither to resign his Sunday-school engagement, nor to give up his hope of Florence's love. Mr. Lockwood might fume and storm as he pleased, but beyond withholding the wealth, which Mark, with a young man's ardour, despised, he could do him no real harm. Was he not strong of limb, sound of chest, brave of heart, and competent to win his way in his profession? Then why should he submit to this tyranny? Was it not best to be free at once, and for ever, of all such restrictions? The young man decided that it was, and made up his mind most emphatically not to submit. He would not give up Florence to please all the uncles in Christendom.

# CHAPTER IX.

#### OUT AT SEA.

"Fear was within the tossing Lark,
When stormy winds grew loud,
And waves came rolling high and dark,
And the tall mast was howed.
The men stood breathless in their dread,
And baffled in their skill;
But One was there who rose and said
To the wild sea, 'Be still,'
And slumber settled on the deep,
And silence on the blast;
They sank, as flowers that fold to sleep
When sultry day is past."—Mrs. Hemans.

ALF. GODFREY, despite his passionate predilection for the sea, had entered on some new and not altogether pleasant experiences of life. Indeed, were I to say that they had been very unpleasant, I should be telling the strict truth;

for, however much the lad loved and worshipped the sea, he had no special liking for cold, weariness, fatigue, sickness, hardships, and lack of necessary rest; and all these came upon him in plenty before the Neptune had reached her destination. Of course he had sea-sickness to begin with, and a pretty smart attack too, lasting for seven or eight days. Alf. never felt so ill in all his life before, for, being generally of robust health, he had grown up to the present almost free of sickness. With a landsman's fate, he soon succumbed to the swell of the sea, and at one time concluded himself to be dying. Says a voyager: "There are three stages in sea-sickness; in the first you feel sick of life, in the second, you think you shall die, and in the third you absolutely wish for death." Alf. passed through all these stages, and remembered home and friends with misery of heart, rendered all the more acute by the knowledge that his present troubles were the result of his own Added to this, he had to turn out of his bunk and attempt to perform his duties when scarcely able to stand. There was no time for sickness on board the Neptune. She only carried her necessary complement of hands, all well; and if sickness or misfortune set in, the other members of the crew had to make up the deficiency. The captain was not a hard unfeeling man, as ship captains too often are—he only kept strict discipline on board, and saw that everyone did his duty; but even this seemed terribly hard to Alf. when trembling with the weakness induced by sea-sickness.

"Now then, youngster," said the mate on the fourth day after sailing, "come out of that and begin work. You've not shipped aboard the *Neptune* to be nursed like a year-old baby. Crawl up on deck, my hearty, and lend a

hand! The fresh air will soon put you to rights."

Thus addressed, Alf. struggled out of his bunk, all the time more dead than alive, and groped his way upon deck, for he was too faint to see it properly. When he got up there some of the men burst into laughter at his woebegone appearance, while others looked on, curious to see what help such a miserable specimen of humanity could render.

"Now, boy," called the mate, "lend a hand here;" and

he set Alf. to work at coiling a rope which lay on the deck. "After that you may get yourself a can of hot tea, and then you're to help Roberts clear the decks. I shall give you some lessons in seamanship to-morrow."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Alf., imitating the usual reply of the sailors, and he went forward to execute his duty. But, all at once, sight, feeling, and sense failed, and with a

lurch of the ship, he fell forward a senseless heap.

"Got to be broken in yet to salt water, sir," said Roberts to the mate. "What shall we do with him?" as he sur-

veyed Alf.'s first futile essay at seamanship.

"I hope he's soon going to get broken in, then," returned the officer. "We can't have useless lumber like that aboard ship. Take him down to the bunk again, and get him some tea, or some brandy. He ought to be hopping about quite lively now."

Roberts carried the lad down to his bunk still unconscious, and then brought him back to consciousness with the best

restoratives he could obtain.

Presently Alf. opened his eyes, and seeing the sailor feeding him like a baby, asked feebly, "Where am I? What is it?"

"What is it? Why, just this," returned the sailor; "you must make haste and get better, or you'll get the medicine of a rope's-ending. You've been aboard now four days and more, not one haporth o' good, and the skipper don't want sick boys about him."

"Oh!" groaned Alf., "I wish I were at home again, or

dead."

"Don't be a coward, lad," returned the old salt. "For nearly fifty years I've followed the sea, and it's a pretty fair life on the whole. You can't know anything about it yet."

"Oh! but it's awful, this faintness."

"Yes, of course it is; but you've got to get over that, my hearty. When it's over you'll be all the better for it, and I'd advise you to pluck up, unless you want to go to Davy Jones's locker. Lie still a few minutes, and then come on deck again. Show the skipper that you've got pluck; he and the mate like pluck, but they can't abear shamming.

But I can't stop now, I've got my duties to look after." So saying Roberts wended his way up the companion-ladder, and left Alf. to his own reflections, which were none of the most comforting.

Sea-sickness did not always continue, however, and when it was over Alf. began to obtain some insight into his duties.

Being cabin-boy, he had charge of the cabin stores, and fared better than the men before the mast; while, on account of his open, fearless manner, he became a bit of a favourite with the captain before very long. Then, as, according to the terms of his agreement, he was to learn the art of seamanship, step by step he was initiated into the mysteries of cordage, sails, reefing, tacking, and "splicing," to say nothing of "swabbing" decks, taking turns on watch, giving a lift here, and "bearing a hand" there, in response to the multifarious calls which were ever awaiting him on board the Neptune. Roberts, who had been his friend from the first, imparted a great deal of nautical instruction to the lad, and altogether proved himself such a real friend, that a firm friendship sprung up between the hardy old salt and the young tyro.

It was not so bad during their run over the broad Atlantic. For the most part, after leaving northern latitudes, they got into calm seas and fine weather. Indeed, at one time the heat was tropical, and the hands were glad to spend as much of their time as possible on deck. But after crossing the equator, and leaving tropical regions, the Neptune, as she kept on her southward course, came into cold regions, and finally, as she drew near Cape Horn, got into the swell of the Antarctic Ocean. As some of my readers know, Cape Horn is a region of perpetual storms, and here it was that the sailing capabilities of the ship and the seamanship of her officers and men were most severely tested.

Alf. had heard his shipmates speak of the dangers and difficulties of rounding Cape Horn, more than once or twice, and had wonderingly ventured on interrogatories. But not wishing, perhaps, to frighten the lad, Roberts simply told him to "wait and see." And he did see, with a vengeance.

For nearly two months they lived in one continual hurricane. Between the howling blast, the immense breakers, the fierce pelting rain which froze as it fell, the icebergs all around the ship—sometimes far off, sometimes near, threatening to overwhelm her in irremediable ruin—the sleet and blinding foam, which cut their flesh as it fell like icicles upon their faces—all of which were their daily and nightly companions during that memorable two months—it seemed to Alf. that this Cape Horn must be purgatory itself. But there was no going back. They must pass on if they would reach

brighter climes.

At last, one night, there seemed to come a crisis. During the day the Neptune had passed a chain of icebergs so perilously near, that it seemed as if certain destruction must follow. The waves broke violently over them, dashing huge masses of ice against the faces of the bergs, now lifting these masses nearly to their summits, then forcing them far into the depths of the ocean, and yet again dashing them into thousands of fragments, while the chilling breath of the ice-king stole into the marrow of the mariners. Worse than this was the fact that the wind was against them, and unless it changed their destruction was inevitable. Two hours more of this blast, and they would be dashed to pieces too, against the icebergs, in spite of the most assiduous care. For nights and nights the crew had not known what it was It was useless to talk of "watches," for there could be no regular watches kept, an hour's sleep now and then being all that the hands could snatch—Alf. among them. The wind, however, suddenly changed, just when their destruction seemed certain, and before evening actually drew on, it blew a hurricane towards the land.

As darkness deepened the danger increased, and the officers felt almost as apprehensive of danger from the rocks,

as they had been from the icebergs.

"All hands ahoy," sung out the mate, after about two hours of storm and darkness. "All of you to your posts."

Alf. had just tumbled in for an hour's rest, almost too weary to think of life; but at the summons, he, with the other three composing his watch, went up on deck. It was only by the flickering light of the lamp away up among the

rigging, that they could distinguish anything at all, and even that little light only seemed to make the surrounding dark-

ness more profound.

"Here, you four," shouted the mate, "now work with a will! Reef the maintopsail at once," he shouted, with a voice of thunder; had he not, no order could have been understood.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response from the hands, and away

they sprang to execute the order.

As they went up the rigging, clinging for dear life to the ropes, which were like solid strands of ice, old Roberts was by the side of Alf., and encouraged the lad in the perilous As is usual with sailors on an errand of this kind, there was a sort of competition as to which should be at the post of danger first. This distinction fell not, however, to Alf. or to Roberts, for the one was too inexperienced and the other too old. One of the other two hands reached the top first, and holding on grimly, awaited his companions' help. Presently they were all hard at the task, and after some minutes' breathless, dangerous toil, the sail was reefed. Then, on Alf. looking round, he for the first time missed Roberts. Where could be be? He could not see a foot before him, it was so pitch dark; the wind was howling with a terrible roar, and the sea dashing in waves, mountains high, hungry for human life, while, as I said, the frozen ropes cut and tortured his hands like knives, while yet he clung to them as the only chance for life. It was useless to shout a question to his other two companions, for they could not hear him if he had; but yet the old man was gone. Only five minutes before he had been on his left hand, and now he had suddenly disappeared, and made no sign. He could not understand it, but slowly, and wonderingly, he with the rest crept down the rigging again. On reaching the deck there was the chief mate and the captain awaiting their return.

"All hands aft," was the command, and in obedience to the order the men paraded in front of the captain and mate, who looked at each one as earnestly as it was possible to do.

"Grog, turn in," was the next order—the last part

of it being meant specially for those who had been reefing the sail.

"Ay, ay, sir;" and with that they all trooped down to the boatswain's locker. Here, by the light of his lamp, a good view could be taken of the faces of all the men, as they came forward one after the other to receive their allowance. Greatly to the surprise of them all, however, the captain came forward too, and taking his stand by the side of the boatswain, closely scrutinized each man's face.

Presently, as the last of them was taking his rum, he spoke,

"Where is old Jimmy Roberts?"

"Don't know, captain," said one of the men.

"Isn't he here?" said another, looking round; while Alf. peered into the thick darkness as if to catch the shadow of the form of his just now companion.

"He's gone overboard—dead," said the captain, solemnly. At this the men gave a perceptible start, and Alf. felt

perfectly horrified.

"Yes, lads; it's too true. While you were busy reefing the sail, the mate and I standing on the deck saw, or rather heard, a heavy body come crashing down. We were not near enough to snatch at the poor fellow, but he struck on the side of the vessel heavily, and then rolled over into the sea. We both rushed to the side and looked over. Not a cry or a sound did he make, but just went like a log of wood. Depend upon it, his back was broken, and so death was instantaneous. I wanted to see which of you it was; poor Roberts, it seems, is the one."

Can you imagine Alf.'s feeling as he turned in below with his companions? His fellow shipmate, his friend—for Jimmy Roberts had befriended him when nobody else had cared a rush for his inexperience and his sickness—to be thus awfully snatched from life and hurried into eternity—it seemed too awful to think of. He went to his hammock, but the thought of it was too much for him to rest. Sitting down on his chest he talked it over with the others, until eight bells sounded and it was his turn to go on deck

again.

### CHAPTER X.

### SEEKING HIS FORTUNE.

"If happiness has not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be rich, and wise, and great,
But never can be blest."

The cloud had burst at last upon Mark Lisburne's head. Mr. Lockwood was not remarkable for patience and long-suffering at the very best of times; but when his provocation continued week after week, and month after month, his impatient anger blazed forth in all its fulness. Yet, before proceeding to final measures, he gave Mark one more opportunity, as he called it, of mending matters; but Mark refused to embrace it. On the contrary, he turned round and flatly told his uncle that he should surrender his principles for nothing, not even a fortune, and that he should never resign Florence Godfrey while there remained a chance of winning her. That same day Mark was sternly dismissed from his uncle's house, and the next morning Mr. Lockwood's lawyer was sent for to make a fresh will.

Fairly cast on his own resources and penniless, except for the six months' salary which Mr. Lockwood had paid him in advance, it now became his first duty to look out for another sphere of labour. But before engaging in any other sphere, he wended his way one evening to Mr. Godfrey's house, intending to discuss the affair with him. Having great faith in his business capabilities, and with no other friend at hand just then, Mark fancied it would be the best

thing he could do.

"And so you and Mr. Lockwood have finally parted?" said Mr. Godfrey, as Mark finished his narrative. The two sat alone in a small room opening out of the parlour, which was generally used as a kind of office by Mr. Godfrey.

"Yes; I am well aware that some people might call me foolish," replied Mark; "but I cannot consent to be treated

day by day as if I possessed no mind of my own. I freely admit—and have admitted to my uncle—that I owe much to him, but I cannot make him lord of my conscience."

"I don't blame you, Mr. Lisburne. You have only done right in emancipating yourself from such bondage, and you have only yourself to consider. Surely in a city like Man-

chester you can find another position."

"I mean to try; and if I cannot do that, I shall look out somewhere else. Meanwhile, Mr. Godfrey, you cannot put your veto altogether on my addressing your daughter. This is partly the result of my affection for her. Now that I am free, will you give me leave to speak to her?"

Mr. Godfrey shook his head. He had lived in the world all these years to very little purpose if he could not see ahead better than a young man who had his own way to

make.

"I am your truest friend in forbidding you to do so."

"My truest friend?"

"Yes. Do you not see that it is more kindness on my part to insist on your remaining free and unfettered, until you have made a position for yourself? You have quite enough to do now to fight your own way, and I believe you will do so. I admire you for your pluck and independence of spirit. But still, for your own sake, you must not be hampered with any engagement."

"But one of the reasons for which I resigned a position

which was assured to me, was my love for Florence."

"That is a great compliment to my daughter, Mr. Lisburne. But even out of regard for her I could not consent to a formal engagement at present. She is too young for anything of that kind. That is my objection as far she is concerned."

"Then I beseech you not to forbid me her friendship," said the young man, in a tone of great emotion. "I shall need that to sustain me in my uphill path of life; and having it, I shall go forth all the stronger to meet and combat obstacles."

"Friendship is a somewhat dangerous thing to contemplate between two young people of your ages. It may precipitate the matter at once, Mr. Lisburne. You see I have a streak of Scotch blood in my veins, and I cannot help being cautious."

"But I will give you my word, Mr. Godfrey," replied Mark, "that I will not seek an engagement if you forbid it. Only, in my struggles for a position it will be an amazing

help to me to have a little human sympathy."

"Then be it so, Mr. Lisburne," replied Mr. Godfrey. "As a friend, we shall be glad of your calls sometimes; and believe me when I say that I wish you success with all my heart. In that wish I make no doubt but that Florence will unite with me."

And so saying the two returned to the parlour, where Florence was bending over some embroidery, by the light of the chandelier. A tell-tale blush mounted to her face as she recognized the visitor, but she rose and saluted him with as little embarrassment as possible. Mrs. Godfrey did the same, and then the four subsided into a desultory kind of chat on the state of affairs in Manchester.

But Mark was not at ease in his mind. He was disturbed and unsettled, and the severe discipline under which he must place himself, by the fiat of Mr. Godfrey, for some time to come, almost banishing the thought of love, did not tend to restore his equanimity. After an hour spent in conversation with the Godfreys he departed to the solitude of his new lodgings, there to indite a letter of explanation

to his mother, and arrange his plans of action.

That night, before going to rest, Mark laid the whole matter open to his mother, feeling sure of her sympathy and counsel. Still he could not but fear that her motherly pride and natural caution might take the alarm at his present friendless position, and it became his province to dispel her alarm. Beside which, Mr. Lockwood would convey the intelligence of his nephew's ingratitude (?) to her, fast enough, (if he had not done it already,) and it became his bounden duty to state his own case simply and fairly. This he did. Said he:—

"I know you will not blame me very long, mother, even if at first you should feel inclined to do so. As you know, and have repeatedly heard me say, I am deeply grateful to Uncle Lockwood for the help which he has given me thus

far in my profession. I know that I owe a great deal to him, and I have never been chary of acknowledging it. when a man, by virtue of benefits conferred, seeks to rule my conscience and to fetter my opinions, I must and shall persistently rebel against it. I have not grown up to this age without gaining opinions of my own, both on religious and social matters, and these opinions clashed with Uncle Lockwood's, most decidedly. He despises Sunday-school work; I practise it. He belives more in rank, titles, social position, and money, than he does in humble worth—in fact, he thinks most virtues inseparable from a niche in Debrett's Peerage, or Baronetage. Beside my Sunday-school engagements, I have given him another cause of offence, and it is this—I have dared to make choice of a retiring, modest, middle-class, but lady-like and educated girl as my love, and to maintain boldly that if ever I marry, she shall be my wife. (There is no engagement as yet, but I hope there will be some day.) This has been the crowning act of insubordination, and for this I am expelled from his house and practice, and, according to his own words, 'disinherited.'

"Now, dear mother, you know all, and as I have told you my position I will also tell you my hopes. You know I have a good profession, and a pretty fair standing in it; with health, strength, and willingness, it will be hard indeed if I cannot make a niche for myself. The infirmary here has just now two or three vacancies for medical assistants, and I shall apply at once for one of these. The emoluments of most of these offices are fair, and afford a good beginning for young fellows like me. If I can succeed in getting a post there I shall use it as a stepping-stone to a better. At any rate, you shall know from me very soon how matters turn. Meanwhile, believe in me, and hope for the best."

So ran part of Mark's letter to his mother. While announcing the state of matters to her as briefly as possible it also expressed his hopeful determination to succeed, if success were at all possible. And so far as his hopes in connection with the infirmary went he did succeed, for after a week's delay he was appointed house-surgeon to that institution. His life's discipline commenced with less of

weary waiting and disappointment than many of his age experience.

His first step was to inform his friends at home of his

success; his next, to tell the Godfreys.

At this visit he found only Florence and the junior members of the family at home, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey being absent on necessary business. Mark did not regret this, as you may suppose, it being Florence who was his special attraction there.

"Miss Godfrey," said he, "I ask you to congratulate me; I am appointed house-surgeon to the infirmary," were his

first words as soon as the usual greetings were over.

"Indeed I do," replied she. "I heard father say that you had parted from your uncle, and I was wondering what

step you would take."

"Yes, I have parted from my uncle, because he has dismissed me. He has disinherited me, as he says, because we could not see eye to eye on certain matters. Whether he will ever see cause to change his mind or not, I cannot say; but meanwhile I have a capital chance of trying my own luck, and tasting the sweets of independence."

"I hope you will succeed in life," said Florence. "I am sure I wish you all prosperity." It was evident from her manner that she was ignorant of the real facts of the case. Mr. Godfrey had, with his usual caution, abstained from repeating the facts communicated to him, in his family circle.

Mark saw this and determined to enlighten her.

"Do you know why I prefer independence to gilded fetters, Miss Godfrey? It is because I hope to win you. My uncle was displeased with me on your account, among other things, and insisted on my giving you up. I refused to do so while any chance of winning you remained; and now that I am a free agent I can speak to you more boldly. You said once, Florence, that you could not consent to my addresses on account of my friends. Now, however, we stand on equal footing, and are free to decide for ourselves as to our future. Still, I promised your father the other night that I would not seek an engagement until I had his permission, and that promise I do not intend to break. But you can assure me of your friendship, Florence, and

your sympathy; it will make my struggles all the sweeter."

"You have both," said Florence; "more even than you think." And the look that accompanied it spoke more

eloquently than her words.

"Thank you; with this assurance I can wait. The time will pass almost unnoticed when I know that I have something to strive for. Beside that, there is the exultation of feeling that I am a free man, and that is no small boon to one who has writhed scores of times under a domestic despotism. The more I think of it the more I am convinced that it was the best step I could have taken."

"And how do you think you will like your duties?"

"Exceedingly well. I have the opportunity of seeing more practice at such an institution than I could have in the routine of private practice. The change will do me incalculable good in my profession, while it will be ultimately as well for me, pecuniarily speaking, as if I had remained with Uncle Lockwood."

"Except the fortune which you would have inherited,"

struck in Florence.

"That I do not care about. I must make my own fortune. And after all, you know that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. If happiness exists not with the prospective possession of a fortune it is all worthless; I would far rather be a poor crossing-sweeper."

"And so I would," thought he, as he wended his way homeward that evening. "If, in order to be my uncle's heir, I must sacrifice my dearest hopes and wishes, I will cheerfully give it all up. It is really a new and delicious feeling to feel a free man once more. Fetters will not suit me at all."

## CHAPTER XL

#### PRACTICAL PHILANTHROPY.

"Who should it be? Where shouldst thou look for kiminess? When we are sick, where can we turn for succour? When we are wretched, where can we complain? And when the world looks cold and surly on us, where can we go to meet a warmer eye With such sure confidence as to a woman's?" Joanna Baillie.

THE cloud of depression and stagnation of trade deepened over the city, and it required all the energies of charity and philanthropy to cope with the poverty and distress which existed everywhere. Philanthropy of every grade hastened with one kind of relief or another to the help of those who could not help themselves. All Lancashire experienced the results of the Bible-taught charity which teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Meanwhile there was one circumstance which contributed to ameliorate the general distress, and that was the advent of summer. Its light and warmth, did away with the acute suffering for lack of sufficient fuel, while the increased cheerfulness of the season enabled the operatives to indulge a little hope that their forced idleness would soon be over.

I have told you that Miss Brookland went about doing good, not only to her own class, but to other people likewise, and the more she could benefit, the more she was delighted. She drew very largely on her own means, and many a fainting one had abundant reason to congratulate himself or herself that she possessed those means. But of course her own class were especially dear to her, and in her increased efforts to meet the prevailing distress they had a double share. She had noticed with painful solicitude the gradually increasing pallor and evident weakness of many of her girls, and knowing the recuperative power of a good meal, made up her mind to confer that boon upon them at

least once a week. So one Sunday afternoon, just before the hour of closing school, she introduced the subject.

"Girls," said she, "there is just one thing I should like to speak about. We might be the better for seeing a little more of each other, now that you have more time to spare. When you were busy at the mills earning your daily bread, I used sometimes to think that an occasional evening spent together would be a boon to us all; but you were so tied by your factory duties that I could not see the way clear to do it. But now you have too much forced leisure, I am sorry to say, and it strikes me that we may turn it to good account, sometimes, at least. What do you say to spending one evening a week at my house—that is, taking tea with me, and then spending the rest of the time in learning to do useful things?"

This was Miss Brookland's womanly way of putting it. Not even would she let it be suspected by the girls that her gift of a good tea to them partook of charity. It was always her way to deal with them in this delicate, thoughtful manner, and so to confer favours upon them that they should not feel overwhelmed with the conferring. Many a charitable lady might well learn a lesson from her.

The girls looked surprised, and then glad, for truth to say they were quite unprepared for the offer. Presently, however, after much nudging and glancing at each other, one of the boldest answered for the rest.

"We should very much like it, teacher," said she; "only —only we shouldn't like to be intruding upon you," she added half hesitatingly. "But if you would bear with us,

we would try to improve."

"You wouldn't be intruding at all," returned Miss Brookland. "I feel as much pleasure in making my offer, as you do in receiving it. I am always glad to do you good, and if I can help to while away any of this weary waiting time, I shall gain my reward in seeing you made happier. Now, then, the next thing is to decide when it shall be."

One afternoon was pretty much like another to the girls, so it was referred back to Miss Brookland after all to say

when it should be.

"Well, Tuesday afternoons would suit me as well as any,"

said she, presently, "so I think, girls, we will choose that day. To begin with, then, all of you come to my house next Tuesday afternoon, and be there by about four o'clock."

Tuesday afternoon came, and no one was missing with the exception of Florence, who, as I have told you before, was more frequently teaching, than in the Bible-class; and on the particular Sunday afternoon happened to be so en-Beside this, Miss Brookland's plan was not meant for her, her home being very different from those of the However, all the rest put in an appearance, and comfortably filled Miss Brookland's largest sitting-room. Indeed, considering that there were twenty of them, it was somewhat amazing to see the quietness and readiness with which they stowed themselves away.

After an hour spent in somewhat desultory conversation, and the examination of pictures and photographs, tea was brought in. Although perfectly decorous and well-behaved, it was plain by the flushing of the girls' faces, and the sudden brightening of their eyes, that the sight of such unwonted plenty was a strange thing to them. Piled up plates of bread and butter, alternated with plain and plum cake, promised such a delicious feast—and how delicious could not be understood, except by those who had passed through the ordeal of stint and privation as they had. None feel the pangs of hunger so keenly as young people when suddenly deprived of their accustomed food, and in the painful interest which the girls displayed with respect to the welcome provision, Miss Brookland could read the eloquent but silent tale of their distress. How she thanked God at that moment that He had put it into her heart to do the deed!

After tea the girls' spirits rose in exact ratio to the amount of the tea and refreshment they had received. Now was Miss Brookland's opportunity for the other part of her scheme. It was by no means her intention that they should spend an idle evening—they had far too many of those already. But, as many of my readers know, factory girls have little opportunity for acquiring those domestic arts which are necessary to every woman if she would acquit herself honourably in the arena of home-life. Long, fatigu

ing hours at the mill, where both head and hands were tried to their extremest limit, precluded the possibility of doing much in the hours of leisure in such womanly occupations as cutting-out, making, mending, knitting, darning, and fancy-work. During the cotton-famine some benevolent philanthropists established sewing and cooking classes for the young women who needed instructions in such matters, and were not too proud to receive them; and Miss Brookland only followed their lead in this particular. Knowing that it would be a new thing to the girls, she took the precaution of obtaining beforehand a good supply of needles, thimbles, cotton, and materials both for sewing and knitting—all of which she now displayed to the wondering eager eyes of her scholars.

"Now look, girls," said she: "I intend these Tuesday evenings to be turned to good account. You see all these things—well, I wish to form you into a sewing-class. I will find the materials, and teach you to sew and knit. Each girl is at liberty to choose what she would best like to make, or what she requires most, before we begin, as after each garment is finished, the maker will keep it for her own use. So if you are willing to learn, we can make a

beginning at once."

"Oh, how good of you, teacher!" "We are only too glad to learn," was echoed by the chorus of voices around her, while the eager eyes sparkled with a new delight at the prospect. And they crowded round the table, looking at the materials, fitting on thimbles, and mentally making choice of the garments most needed; while Miss Brookland superintended the whole, reducing the joyful confusion into

something like order.

Beginning with the eldest scholar, she found that some aprons were the most wanted. These were soon selected, and Molly White set to work as joyfully as she knew how. Then, as the next needed other articles of feminine attire, Miss Brookland was able to give a lesson on the art of "cutting out," by means of which not only Alice Markly, but many more profited. To most of them "cutting out" was worse than deciphering hieroglyphics, and had the materials for garments been placed in their hands as a free

gift, on condition that they should cut them into proper shape

and form, the gift would have been useless. Maggie Selwyn chose to knit a pair of stockings for her mother, so she was very quickly set to work with knittingneedles and worsted. Indeed, by the time all had been made busy, the evening had almost gone, and Miss Brookland's plan of reading aloud to the girls while they worked, had to be deferred till the next meeting. Then it became imperatively necessary to give instruction to the workers, seeing that many of them knew nothing of needlework, and herein Miss Brookland's feminine cleverness became High as she stood in their esteem before, she manifest. stood many degrees higher now, for however ignorant of feminine arts girls may be themselves, they can always respect and honour one who is proficient in these things, in addition to other good qualities. Then, not the least recommendation of the scheme was Miss Brookland's charitable commendation of it to her scholars. Not in a spirit of haughty pride or self-righteous fault-finding, did she lecture them on their ignorance and inefficiency, which were only too apparent, but wisely and gently allured them to her own

mode of thinking by appealing to their self-respect.

"You see, girls," said she, "a woman is only half the use she might be, if she is unable to make, mend, or cut out a garment. I see that you are lacking in these respects, but I do not blame you for it, because I know that you have had to work early and late to earn your livelihood, leaving but little time for you to do anything else. But as a time of forced inaction is come upon you, you cannot improve it better than by obtaining some knowledge in these womanly arts of sewing, cooking, and domestic economy."

"Cooking, teacher?" said one of the eldest girls.

"Yes, certainly. Some of you, if not all, entertain the hope of having some day, homes of your own, where you will be queens of your own little kingdoms. Then, I am sure you must agree with me that it is necessary for you to be well grounded in all those things women ought to know, belonging to domestic economy, so as to make those home-kingdoms happy and prosperous. My plan is that you should learn something of needlework first, at these weekly

meetings; then take some practical lessons in cooking, while I give you a little talk sometimes about other departments of domestic economy. So that, if you are as willing as I am, we will make these Tuesday evening gatherings subservient to your temporal good as well as, I hope, your

spiritual well-being."

"How kind of you, teacher! how thoughtful!" said several of the girls; while many others looked the mute thankfulness they could not speak. Some of them, I must confess, did not look so much obliged. Perhaps they thought, as many girls of that age do, that such feminine arts as Miss Brookland was recommending to them, would all "come by-and-by," when they were needed. Poor girls! it was very plain they had not discovered their own ignorance yet.

But however much they might have contemned Miss Brookland's good intentions in these matters, they soon showed themselves amenable to the influences of the good cheer which she set before them in the shape of appetising slices of bread and cheese, and fragrant cups of coffee. With a will they all partook of this, and then, after singing a hymn together, they read a couple of chapters by verses, and Miss Brookland prayed. So ended a quiet evening of real, practical philanthropy. As the girls wended their ways to their several homes, they felt that they owed the deepest gratitude to their Sunday-school teacher.

# CHAPTER XII.

### HOME CONFERENCE.

"YES, it must be engigration, depend on it; there is no other way for us cut of our troubles."

The speaker was Mr. Godfrey, and as he uttered the words one could see that his heart assented to a very painful

proposition. It was the last resource of baffled industry, and included so much of pain and anxiety in the outlook that it was no wonder both speaker and hearers looked somewhat sorrowful. The only listeners were Mrs. Godfrey and Florence, the younger branches of the family being in bed; but for the past hour these three had formed themselves into a household committee of ways and means, discussing the desirability of making some move before utter destitution came upon them like a strong man armed. Matters in the city still looked dark,—indeed, darker than A few of the mills which had hitherto been running short-time were altogether closed, and the vast number of paupers thrown already on the poor-rates and public charity was increased suddenly by several thousands. In America the tide of civil war rolled on ceaselessly, making her homes desolate, and spilling the life-blood of thousands of the best and bravest of her sons; while, as for trade and commerce, no one seemed to have a thought about it. little cotton had come in from India, and Egypt, and had eagerly been seized by the Manchester men, if haply it could be made use of; but to the disappointment of thousands it was found unsuitable. England had relied so long and so continuously upon America for cotton, that she had forgotten to encourage other growers; consequently, when the necessity arose, they were found inadequate to the task of supplying the deficiency. The country learned a lesson then which it laid to heart, but while it was doing so the toilers in that particular branch of industry had to suffer and well-nigh starve.

As I have told you before, Mr. Godfrey had been brought up in the midst of agricultural life, and had in his youth a practical acquaintance with sheep-farming, and similar rural occupations. But being enamoured of city life, and having a turn for trade, he had forsaken the paternal homestead, and taken advantage of a good opening which offered itself in Messrs. Goodhugh's employment. He had steadily risen there step by step, until it had seemed likely that at some no very distant day he would have a share in the concern, though possibly a small one. But now that his hopes were all shattered in that respect, his thoughts went back to the

occupations of his youth, and, resolving never to sit down and await calmly the destitution which appeared inevitable, he looked the chances of emigration fairly and fully in the face, and on this particular evening this subject formed the matter of their conversation.

"Yes-emigration it must be; what do you think of it,

my dear?"

"I am not particularly enamoured of emigration, John," returned Mrs. Godfrey; "but if there is no other resource I must consent, I suppose. But supposing you really made up your mind to go, which colony would you choose?"

"Oh, Australia, decidedly. I have thought of New Zealand, but all things considered, Australia would be far

preferable."

"And what would you do, once out there?"

"Turn sheep-farmer."

"Sheep-farmer?"

"Yes, Australia has the advantage of possessing large tracts of pasture-land suitable for such an occupation, and my capital would be sufficient to set me up in business in a pretty fair way there. Farming is too expensive here to be managed by a small capitalist."

"But it is hard, nevertheless, to go so many thousands of miles in order to get bread," said Mrs. Godfrey, shrinking in true womanly fashion from the prospect. "Can we do

nothing in England?"

"My dear," returned Mr. Godfrey, "I have answered advertisement after advertisement relating to one situation and another, unknown to you, because I would not worry your mind by raising expectations which might not after all be realized; but in every case I have failed. The labour market is overstocked; better men than I am are starving for lack of work, and such will be my fate if I don't soon bestir myself. Then, on the other hand, if we remain about here long enough to spend all our capital, it would be useless to talk of doing anything. Still, if you object, I will not insist on it. I would be the last to drag a wife to a foreign country against her will."

"I will not stand in your way," returned Mrs. Godfrey.
"I have not the strong objection which some have to life in

a foreign land, although, of course, I would prefer English life on the whole. But do you think it likely that we should bear transplanting? We are neither of us young as we were once, and as the proverb says, 'old trees do not bear transplanting.'"

"I have no fears on that score," replied Mr. Godfrey, "as far as I am personally concerned; my only anxiety would be for you. Florence," added he; "I suppose you

would not mind changing countries?"

"No, papa, if the necessity must come," she said promptly; 
"young people have fewer ties than older ones, and I dare say we should all like Australian life in time." Florence could not help feeling a little twinge as she spoke, for the recollection of Mark Lisburne and his professed love crossed her mind; but like a brave, true woman she kept it back, feeling resolved not to make any addition to the anxiety which her parents already experienced.

"But if we decide to go to Australia," said Mrs. Godfrey; "how about Alf.? He would land in England—if spared to come back—perfectly homeless. My poor boy! how I wish he had never left us!" bewailed the mother, turning back-

ward on her own thoughts.

"We could manage that matter very well," said Mr. Godfrey. "I should send immediate word to Alf., through the shipowners, of our decision, and arrange with the firm that on his arrival in Liverpool, he should be transferred to a vessel trading to Melbourne; they have several trading to Australian ports."

"But would Alf. get your letter while in South America?"

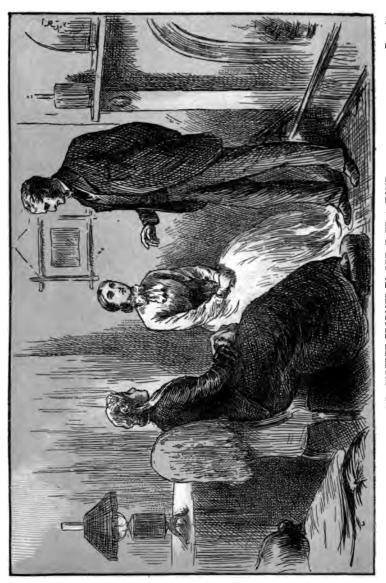
"Yes; the American mail would land it in New York in a fortnight, and from there it would travel overland to Rio, which is the port at which the Neptune will make the longest

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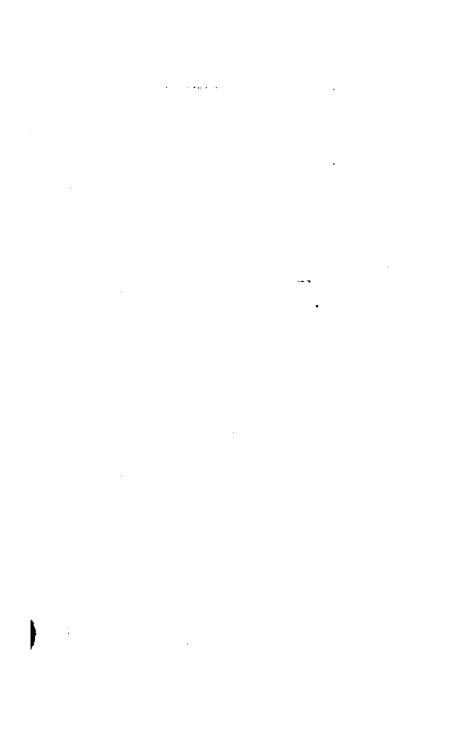
"Then we should meet again at the Antipodes, papa!"

said Florence.

"Yes, sooner or later; of course we should not be living at Melbourne, because the business of sheep-farming would require my taking some large tract of land in the interior; but Alf. could obtain leave of absence, if I spoke to the owners before we leave England. But that reminds me



MR. GODFREY PROPOSES TO BREAK UP A HOME.



that this occupation of sheep-farming might be productive of your greatest difficulty. We should be located far away from civilized life for a long time; indeed, until we had made our position secure, and could afford to hire all the necessary labour, we must be almost banished from the comforts and conveniences to which we have been accustomed."

"Then we must make the best of it, John," returned Mrs. Godfrey. "I would rather far be a thriving settler's wife in Australia than starve in Manchester for the sake of clinging to our native land; and if Alf. could join us there, perhaps he would renounce his seafaring life for a colonial one."

"In all probability he might," returned Mr. Godfrey; "and if he did, we would do our utmost to get his indentures cancelled. He would be of great service to me there, supposing such a change should take place."

"But next, when do you propose going?"

"As quickly as possible. There is not time to spare; I should not like to diminish my capital by waiting for the chance of employment which will never come; and six hundred pounds is a sum quite small enough wherewith to embark in business. Our other resources are sufficient, I think, to carry us out there; so what do you say to sailing in the course of three or four weeks?"

This was presenting the matter in the light of a near-athand reality to Mrs. Godfrey and Florence. It had been speculation and mere planning before; but to talk of sailing from the land of their birth in so many days, or weeks,

made the matter wear another aspect.

"I must have time to think it over, John, and get accustomed to it. It comes upon me so suddenly that it almost takes away my breath. Let me think it over a bit and take it all in before we finally decide." Mrs. Godfrey looked as if all her endurance were oozing out at her finger's ends at the near prospect of emigration. You must not think her cowardly or weak-minded because of this; one does not get brave all at once to bear trouble.

"Very well, dear; let it be so," rejoined Mr. Godfrey.
"We will let the matter lie for a few days; but remember,

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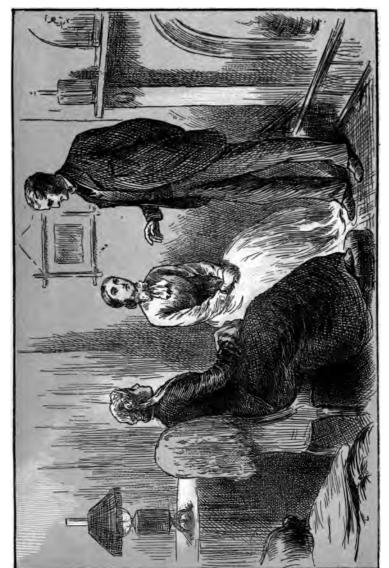
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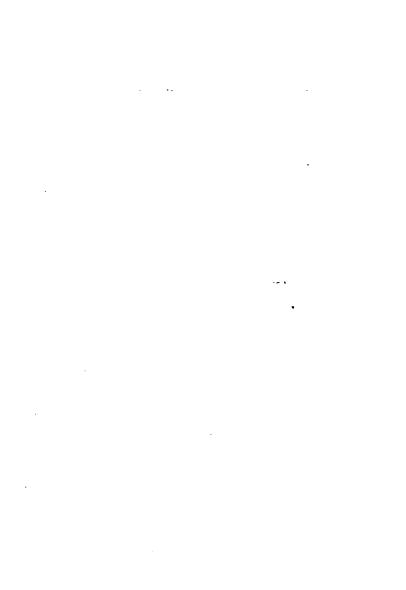
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"Very well, dear; let it be so," rejoined Mr. Godfrey.
"We will let the matter lie for a few days; but remember,

as I said just now, if you cannot make up your mind to the thought of emigration, I will not press you to go against your will." And so the matter dropped; but the minds of all three were none the less busy because of the fact that silence was tacitly observed on the subject.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## ALF.'S EXPERIENCES OF LIFE AT VALPARAISO.

THE Neptune had successfully rounded Cape Horn, and was nearing Valparaiso, the first port at which Captain Hales had to do business. Alfred had got over his qualms at the rough sea life, and had become, for his four months' experience, a pretty fair sailor; so, with a lad's love of adventure and sight-seeing, he looked forward to their stay at the various South American ports, with pleasure. Valparaiso, as most of my readers know, is the great trading port of Chili, exporting wheat, tallow, hides, copper, gold, indigo, wool, and drugs, to the immense aggrandizement of the merchants who inhabit the palatial mansions which are to be found in the suburbs of the city, as well as of the homestaying traders, who despatch their well-laden vessels to traffic along the coast. Captain Hales expected to be detained at Valparaiso more than a fortnight, and as each of the ship's hands would have his share of leave for going on shore, Alf. anticipated plenty of amusement and interest from his rambles in the queer Chilian city, and most probably would not have objected to see one of the earthquakes for which the district is famous. But there is something else for which those South American ports are famous, and that is the dreadful scourge, yellow fever. It was raging in Valparaiso at the time the Neptune was nearing that port, and ere the vessel arrived there, an unlucky wind conveyed the infection to her crew. Twenty-four hours before reaching port the Neptume could have shown a clean bill of health; but as it turned out, by the time they sighted the city, one of the hands was hopelessly ill, and laid up helpless in his hammock. It was Mr. Masters, the mate, who came, with a most lugubrious countenance, and with almost faltering voice, to tell the captain the unwelcome news.

"What! Do you mean to say that Conan is very ill?"

said Captain Hales with a gesture of impatience.

"Yes, there's no mistake. It isn't a case of malingering. I felt quite angry with him, because of the miserable period of quarantine which will inevitably come to our share, if it gets to be known that we had anybody ill on board; so I went below to see and question him for myself. I fear it's a case of yellow fever."

"Yellow fever! Why, Masters, are you mad?" demanded the captain aghast.

"No, I'm not mad; but I never saw a case of yellow fever, if this is not; and now for forty days' quarantine."

"Was there ever such an unlucky voyage as this?" said Captain Hales. "We've had little else than storms and hurricanes this past three months, and now, after reaching port, to be condemned to waste time and money, because one of the ship's crew chooses to fall ill just at the last minute! Couldn't we smuggle Conan out of sight, think you, till the inspection is over?"

"I fear not, sir. The authorities are likely to be very sharp in their inspection. The pilot has just told me that

yellow fever is raging in the port."

"Worse and worse," said Captain Hales. "But to make sure, I'll go below and see Conan for myself. I suppose I must doctor the fellow, too; I don't want it on my conscience if he should die." And making a virtue of necessity he went below.

Captain Hales was not a harsh man naturally. He liked to be just both to his employers and to his crew; and generally speaking, he was kind and forbearing if illness visited his men. But the idea of six weeks' quarantine nearly drove him wild. That time would have sufficed for all his trading operations at Valparaiso, Callao, and Lima, to say nothing of the smaller ports at which he would have called; so that the thought of remaining inactive for such a pro-

longed season seemed unbearable. If there was any way of

avoiding it, it must be avoided.

But Conan was too ill to be sent upon deck, or "smuggled" out of sight during the inspection. Indeed he bade fair to be "smuggled" ere long into his last long restingplace beneath the cool sea waves, unless a speedy change took place. As he looked up at his captain, there was scarcely consciousness left to speak intelligibly, although not twenty-four hours had elapsed since his seizure. It was unmistakably a bad case of fever. There was the splitting pain, the yellow tinge of the countenance, the fearful sickness, and the muttering delirium. Captain Hales and Mr. Masters had been sailors long enough to recognize the peculiar features of the disease, for in their frequent voyages to South American ports they had seen many a stalwart seaman sink under it. It was not any use talking or complaining—the inevitable must be submitted to; so, making the best of it, Captain Hales selected the best remedies he could think of from his medicine chest, and after administering some, left the others in the charge of the man who was looking after Conan; then ascending to the deck he sat down to reflect.

Valparaiso was now in full view. Before dark, the Neptune would be lying at anchor in the port; but then, as soon as her anchor would be cast there, the inspector and medical officer would come on board, and ten minutes would suffice to know their doom. As he anticipated, so it turned out. The anchor was scarcely dropped, and Alf. was looking out over the vessel's side at the city, hoping and wishing that he might have one good ramble on terra firma after his long dreary voyage, when two strangers, dressed in semi-official costume, were rowed alongside and came on board. They were the two officials whom Captain Hales dreaded, yet nevertheless he came forward to met them with all due courtesy, and stood prepared to answer their queries.

"Any of your hands sick?" said the doctor, as soon as the port-inspector had gone through his list of questions.

"Well, yesterday this time we could have shown a clean bill of health, but since then one of our hands has been ailing." "Indeed! that looks rather suspicious. Where is the man?"

"Below in his bunk. He is very ill now, but I assure

you his illness has not lasted longer than I say."

"That may be, but as yellow fever is raging in the port and city just now, we are bound to be very particular. Hundreds of people have died off during the past month." So saying he dived down below to see the case for himself.

"As bad a case as I ever saw," said he, coming up presently. "You must go into quarantine for forty days."

My younger readers may not be aware that "quarantine" means a period of isolation, during which all communication with others is strictly forbidden. In this case the whole of the ship's company would be prohibited from going on shore for the time named on any pretence whatever. You may imagine how heavily time would hang on their hands, and how greatly the interests of the owners would suffer.

"It will be ruin to us to stop here in idleness all that time,"

urged Captain Hales.

"Can't help it. Your ship is infected, and the most stringent measures must be adopted." So saying, the two officials walked off, leaving Captain Hales to chew the bitter cud of his own reflections, and to wish himself further from the

infected port.

Day after day of the dreaded season passed by, and still matters grew worse. The black flag was flying from other ships in the port, if that could be any consolation to them; but it was not. It only showed that the direful epidemic was raging all around them, and in that fact there lay little hope for their own safety. Poor Conan died in two or three days after the commencement of quarantine, but before he passed away, two others of the hands were seized with the fever, and within two more days, the mate. While matters wore this depressing aspect, Captain Hales was more like one demented than anything else. It tried his endurance beyond expression, to be compelled to see one after another of his brave fellows stricken down with no succour at hand, and scarcely any means of helping them. He felt like a bird caged in for certain destruction. Meanwhile the other hands crept about their duties in a forlorn, awe-stricken kind

of way, and as they listened to the groans of the dying men below, they trembled, not knowing whose turn might come Sailors are a most superstitious set of men, and every trivial occurrence was twisted into an omen of bad import.

By this time Alf. Godfrey began to think that he had seen enough and to spare of the dark side of seafaring life, as I suppose you would, had you been in his place. was on the second Sunday after being placed in quarantine that he took his little Sunday-school Bible, and ascending the rigging, betook himself to a quiet secluded perch where he could read and think. Plenty of food for reflection had he now. Two of their number had died and had been cast overboard, to the solemn rhythm of the beautiful English service for burial at sea. Four more lay ill below, and of these, two would, to all appearance, be in eternity before morning.

The mate was one of these dying ones; and as the remaining hands looked at one another, each wondered whose turn would come next. Alf. could see from his elevated position a good part of the town and harbour. The summer sun was shining in all its oppressive brilliancy upon the white buildings, and thousands of people were abroad in the streets, either for worship or pleasure. The chimes of the Roman Catholic places of worship summoned their votaries to prayer, and as Alf. listened to their echoes, borne to his ear across the water, he wondered if ever he should hear the chimes of English church-going bells again. How they reminded him of home and friends, and Sabbath services,—those musical chimes! and how vividly the instructions of his teacher came back to him, then! Especially that last interview, when his teacher had prayed so fervently and so solemnly for his conversion. He had thought it a solemn thing then, but now, with death staring him in the face, he found it a much more solemn thing. What if he should be taken ill with yellow fever; what if he should die here, far away from home, among strangers, without the loving care of home, or a near friend to close his eyes! And he might die. He was not sure of immunity from the fell disease, any more than others. In a ship not very far from his own, the cabin boy had been buried that morning—dropped into the What if it had been he? Ah! believe me. Alfred realized, in all its bitterness, the dark side of a sailor's life that Sunday afternoon. You must not think him unmanly if the tear did roll down his cheek, or if that cheek turned pale at the near prospect of death. Opening his little Bible, he read several chapters as he had never read them before; and I dare venture to say he understood them as he never understood them before. Then, closing the volume, he tried to remember some of his teacher's instructions. burne's kind thoughtful face now rose up before him as of yore, and once again he saw in his mind's eye the lads as they used to sit round him. Some of his words he could recall, and they comforted him; but the thing that was most vivid in his recollection was that last prayer which Mr. Lisburne offered for him. How he wished he could but see him now, but - "Ahoy, there!" a rough voice summoned him below.

Nevertheless, Alf. was the better and the stronger for that Sabbath afternoon meditation. It was the beginning of a new life with him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### COMFORTING THE DYING.

"Improve time in time, While time lasts, For all time's no time, When time's past."

ALFRED soon had to put his new resolves into practice. Had anybody told him that morning that he would have to administer spiritual consolation to the dying, he would have laughed at the notion; but so it came to pass. In the evening he was ordered below to assist in attending upon his sick mates. As I said in my last chapter, four of the

ship's company lay ill below, and of these, two were dying. Of the dying men, one was the mate, and as Alf. entered the sick ward, his eye caught the lad. He had been delirious, but was conscious now, and as soon as he could speak he said to the boy:

"I am going to die—I know I am. I want somebody to read something to me before I do go. I've a Bible some-

where in my chest, if you could only find it."

The words were spoken more in gasps than anything else,

but they were perfectly audible.

"I have a Bible too, Mr. Masters," replied Alfred. "I can read out of that if you like, without troubling to fetch yours."

"Very well. Do it quickly."

Alf. went and got his Bible; then returning, he said,

"Where shall I read, sir?"

"Anywhere, where there is something fit for a dying man. I haven't read the Bible myself for years—more's the pity; but my mother has, and I know she doesn't forget me now. When I was a lad she used to make me read it to her sometimes."

Alf. was only a boy—not used to ministering spiritual comfort to the dying, and for a few minutes he felt considerably nonplussed by the mate's request, in the fact that he scarcely knew what passage to select. Something, however, made him think of the thief on the cross—perhaps some reminiscences of those Sunday-school times which seemed now so far away in the dim, happy past; and turning to the graphic description which Luke gives of the matter, he read it slowly and thoughtfully. Some instinct told him that the story of the forgiveness and acceptance of one sinner at the eleventh hour, was not inappropriate to the case of the other dying, but unforgiven sinner, and this instinct was right

As Alf. read out the last of the verses, the mate said, "Well, if that thief was forgiven, so can I be, though it is the last hour with me; I'll ask the good God to forgive and accept me too. If He doesn't, nobody else will, for I've served the devil all my life only too well. Read me some-

thing else."

This time Alf. turned to the third of John—that epitome of the Gospel, with which anyone may live or die—and read that. The dying man took it all in eagerly, and as far as his failing faculties would permit him believed it. But the declaration that "Whosoever believed on him should not perish but have everlasting life," seemed to impel him to request prayer for this "life." Oh! it is a sorry case when a man who has lived a whole life without praying for himself, is driven to ask at last the prayers of other people, just as the gates of the tomb are opening for him.

"I say, my lad," said the mate; "you've heard people

pray before now?"

"Oh! yes, sir—hundreds of times."

"Well, my senses are going, and I can't say much. Can't you manage a prayer for me? Say it slowly, so that I shall understand."

It was a new cross for Alfred to take up, but that time was not one for making excuses, or backing out of a solemn duty, so he knelt down and prayed a boy's prayer. It was not long-winded, it was not eloquent, it didn't beat round the bush; but it simply begged for pardon for the dying man, in and through the merits of Christ. And the mate repeated each of the simple petitions as they were spoken, with an earnestness which told of the intensity of his feeling. As Alfred rose, he said, "You didn't run away to sea, did you?"

"No, sir; I came with my father's consent. Why?"

"That's right. I ran away, and caused my mother no end of pain before she discovered where I was. I was the eldest of the family, and she naturally concluded that I should be of some comfort to her when my father died; but I fear I plagued her more than all the rest besides. I determined to go to sea, and although she begged me earnestly not to go, nothing would keep me. Then she said I should not go, but I was determined to disobey, and so I ran away. One fine morning I got up before anybody was about, and stole out of the house like a thief. We didn't live far from the sea, so I wasn't long getting to it and shipping myself off. For two long years she didn't know where I was—in fact, I only sent word to her just

before being paid off my first ship. I wrote home a hurried line or two, for after tossing about on the billows so long, I fancied I needed a welcome home somewhere, and my mother received me as kindly as if I'd been the most dutiful boy possible. Ah! she was a Christian, I know she was. She prayed for me then, and she is praying for me now. I tell you, lad, it doesn't pay to despise and dishonour a good mother like that. What wouldn't I give for her presence now, and her soft, quiet ways about me? Perhaps I'm to be cut off like this for my early disobedience."

Alfred ventured to suggest that this might not be the case, seeing that others had died of the yellow fever. Further, he timidly begged the mate not to trouble himself about past times, but to think of the present. It was only in a timid sort of way that he did this, however. All the time he had been on board the *Neptune*, he had looked up to this man as his master, and it was not so easy now to attempt to give advice; it seemed as if he were presuming. But Mr. Masters was too weak and too ill to dispute anything, or to resent the advice of the apprentice lad. The great leveller, Death, had made him humble as a little child.

"Ah! but my boy, there's warrant for what I'm saying in that same Bible, out of which you've been reading. When I was a boy I used to learn the commandments, and if I mistake not, one of them promises length of life to those children who honour their parents. I didn't honour mine, and so I cannot wonder that I'm cut off in the midst of my days."

Alfred sat still, listening to the laboured breathing of the other dying man. He was unconscious, and in fact had been raving in delirium all the day, but now was grown quiet. The mate would most likely be delirious again before dying, but at present he was conscious, and lay employing his fast-fleeting time in prayer. The other two sick men in the ward were not so ill, and in all probability would recover, but they paid the most reverent attention to all that was spoken.

Presently the captain came down. Coming up to the side of the mate, he said, "How are you, Mr. Masters? Do you find yourself any better?"

"No, captain, no. It'll soon be all up with me. And now that I'm come to die, I wish that I'd lived a better life. I have done many things in my life that I'd give the world to be able to blot out now, and they trouble me."

"Oh, you musn't worry about that. We all do the best we can, and nobody can do more than that. You won't fare any worse than the rest of us. But cheer up, you may

yet recover."

"No, captain, that is impossible. But I want to ask of you two favours. The first is that you will communicate with all my friends, and inform them of my death, sending home to them all that belongs to me. You will find the addresses in the letters in my chest. The second is that you will let Godfrey stay by me till I am gone."

"Anything you wish, Mr. Masters, I am most happy to grant. In case you do go, I will send to your friends; but I earnestly hope I shall have no need to do so. With regard to Godfrey, if he's any comfort to you he shall stay by you

as long as you like."

And so Alfred found himself quietly installed as comforter and watcher by the dying man as long as he should need him. It was with very mingled feelings that he mentally accepted the post. It was a post of danger, too, breathing as he was, the feetid atmosphere of that sick ward, and the end of it all might be that he too might take the fever, and possibly succumb to it. Still Alfred Godfrey was no coward, and he determined to do his duty there.

After the captain had gone away, Mr. Masters turned

again to Alf.

"You went to some Sunday-school or other, I suppose, didn't you, my lad?"

"Yes, sir, always."

"Well, do you happen to know a lymn about 'Rock of Ages'?"

"I don't know it exactly, but it's in my Sunday-school hymn-book. If you don't mind, sir, I'll fetch it, and read the hymn to you."

"Yes, do."

Alfred soon reached his chest, and at the bottom—for he had not read it since coming to sea—he found the little

hymn-book,—old, faded, soiled, and dog's-eared, as boys' books are wont to be; but for all that, it seemed in that hour of extremity a very mine of wealth. Mr. Masters welcomed the advent of the little volume as if it were gold.

"Here it is, sir. I'll soon find the hymn; we used to

sing it very often."

Alfred found it and read it over to the mate, not once, nor twice, but even thrice, and more. Still that was not enough. The man seemed to cling to the third verse with an eager grasp, which spoke after all of a feeble sort of faith upspringing in his mind. Again and again yielding to his request, Alfred read it over—

"Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Naked, come to thee for dress; Vile, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

But this hymn, with its clear presentment of Gospel truth, was about the last thing that the mate's failing intellect could grasp; that numbness of the mind and vacancy of the countenance which are so often the precursors of delirium came on apace, and Alfred knew that he would understand very little more. Still, his last words of consciousness were a prayer; and it is to be hoped that that prayer was answered.

The other man preceded the mate into the eternal world. The two sailors who had been told off for sick duty that night quietly wrapped him in his last covering, and sewing it tightly round him, carried the corpse up on deck, and laid it down until the morning should dawn. With the first dawn of day the body would be committed to the waves, and most likely the mate would have passed away also by that time.

At least, so the sailors thought, as they returned and looked upon him. He was now quite unconscious, and muttering about his boyhood's home. Alfred sat looking at him with a most anxious and horror-stricken expression of countenance. He had never seen anybody die, and the

sight of the progress of the King of Terrors was almost too much for him. He might have gone on deck now, had he pleased, or to his bunk, but his sense of duty forbade that. He resolved to abide by his promise, and remain by the mate

until life should be gone.

Just as the first streaks of day were lighting up the eastern horizon the mate passed away, and Alfred's task was finished. There was no sign that Mr. Masters recovered his reason in the least, and Alfred staggered up to the deck nearly faint with watching and fright. You will not wonder if, as he sat there on a coil of rope, he wished himself safely out of the Neptune, and at home in the grimy city And then came the recollection of the danger he was in. The chances were against his ever seeing Manchester again, and as he remembered this a great lump rose in his throat which threatened to choke him. But I think that Alfred had learnt such lessons of life and death in his few months' experience, as he would never be able to forget.

Very soon the burial of the two dead men took place. Sewn up in some coarse sacking, and weighted with shot, the bodies were lifted overboard, while the captain read the The tide carried the two corpses out to sea, there to rest, until that day when the sea shall give up her dead.

But very fortunately the epidemic abated before the six weeks of quarantine were out. Had it not, it is hard to say what would have become of the Neptune's crew, or whether any of them would have returned to old England As it was, more than a dozen men were lost to the ship's company, but Alfred Godfrey passed through the ordeal unscathed.

## CHAPTER XV.

#### GOOD-BYE.

"By the gathering round the winter hearth, When twilight called into household mirth; By the fairy tale or the legend old, In that ring of happy faces told; By the quiet hour when hearts unite In the parting prayer and the kind 'good-night; By the smiling eye and the loving tone, Over thy life has the spell been thrown."

MRS. HIMANS.

"Then your emigration to Australia is finally decided upon?"

"Yes, teacher; in a fortnight more we shall be on our voyage."

"Does not Mrs. Godfrey view it as a trial?"

"Yes. It is a trial to mother to leave England, and so it is to me, although in a lesser degree; but still it is the best thing to be done, so what is to be said? As father says, we must all submit to the inevitable. I know this—go wherever we may, mother will do her best to make it like home for us all."

"It is the truest philosophy, my dear, to take life as we find it. You will not find Australian life like English life, and you will miss a great many comforts and pleasures to which you have been accustomed at first; but you will have compensations. And, possibly—indeed, very probably—God has wise purposes in removing you from our midst. We know very well that He chooseth the bounds of our habitation."

The speakers were Miss Brookland and Florence Godfrey. As usual, in her perplexity, Florence had sought the presence of her friend and counsellor. As soon as it had been definitely arranged that the home should be broken up, and the family should emigrate, Miss Brookland had been informed of it by the young girl, who, although scarcely

conscious of it herself, yet shrank timidly from the prospect of colonial life. As her father had said, there were hardships to be encountered, and difficulties to be faced in the struggle for existence in this new life, of a nature to which she had been a stranger hitherto. Then there were some ties which were hard to break, among them the connection with the Sunday-school, and, although almost unsuspected by herself, a very strong regard for Mark Lisburne. It was in a somewhat disconsolate mood that she betook herself to Miss Brookland's on this occasion.

"What about Alfred?" inquired Miss Brookland. "Suppose he returns only to find you all gone? or can you communicate with him before he leaves South America?"

"It is scarcely possible to do so now," replied Florence. "It is uncertain at what port the Neptune might be at the present time. We may send half a dozon letters, and neither of them reach him. The only course seems to be to leave a letter for Alfred at the office of the owners, so that the circumstances may all be explained to him on his arrival home. This, father will do. Beside this, he has requested that Alfred should be transferred to a vessel bound for Australia for his next voyage, and they have promised that he shall. So you see, teacher, that it is very possible we may all be reunited on the continent of Australia after all."

"I hope you will, most heartily; and perhaps this step may be the best you have ever taken. You know, Florenco, that 'God has a purpose for every man,' and he has a purpose for you. You may do good in your new life in Australia, good which you could not possibly do in England. In your new sphere, with fresh opportunities and fresh people about you, you must endeavour to put into practice the knowledge which you have gained here. I speak of religious knowledge more particularly. You will of a certainty come across ignorant and untrained ones, and you may be a real missionary of good to such."

"A missionary! Why I am only a girl; what can I do? I cannot preach or teach, and if I could, I should be afraid

to open my mouth to a stranger."

"But you do teach now, do you not?"

"Only a few infants in the Sunday-school. But such a class is very different from the miscellaneous gathering

which colonial, or backwoods life would present."

"Never mind. We must all have a beginning, and you have had yours in the infant class. Moses didn't think he could do anything to help the children of Israel when God spoke to him, but he did after all. Instruments as weak and as inefficient as you deem yourself, have done a mighty work for God before now."

"You may gather together a little group of learners if you should be far from the means of grace, and you may teach them something every Sabbath," continued Miss Brookland; "and this little group may be the nucleus of a church in the wilderness, which shall do good to generations yet to

come."

"Oh, teacher," said Florence, in a deprecatory tone, "I

do not believe I could ever undertake that."

"Try," said Miss Brookland. "We are not transplanted from one country to another without an ultimate purpose of good in it. You, unaided and alone, may, under God's direction, be a minister of good to many a one far from his native country and the means of grace. And if you know anything of God's mercy, you will not be content unless you do, for you cannot hide your light under a bushel, long."

"But as you are so soon going to leave us," continued that lady, "I should like the class to bid you God-speed. Suppose we hold our next Tuesday's meeting as a special one for this purpose; would you like to meet all your school-

mates here?"

"I should like it exceedingly, teacher. I have thought of visiting them all round, to say 'good-bye,' but that would take up so much of my time, that I scarcely think I should be able to do it. Your plan is a much better one, and I shall gladly accept it."

"Then meet us all next Tuesday, Florence. I will let the girls know on Sunday, that they may expect to see you

for the last time."

"Thank you, teacher. Only Maggie Selwyn knows of our intended departure. I mentioned it to her last week."

Florence had done this when she had carried the loaf

which had been faithfully handed over to Maggie week by week, ever since the agreement made between mother and daughter. This had been done, so far as Florence knew, without Miss Brookland's cognizance; but the grateful Maggie had not hesitated to inform her teacher of the fact

which Florence so studiously kept to herself.

With the next Tuesday came the girls. As usual, not one was missing, and Florence was welcomed as a dear friend when she made her appearance among them. Some who were there would have shrunk from the prospect of a long dreary voyage to the Antipodes; but others would have welcomed it, or anything else which would have promised relief from the hardships of their condition. Few of them, indeed none, knew the luxury of a good meal, with the accompaniments to be found where plenty reigns, except when they came to Miss Brookland's. The cloud of depression and want had not yet dispersed, and business men, as well as politicians, were at their wits' end to judge of the course of events, or anticipate the results of the struggle.

After tea was cleared away, Miss Brookland proposed having a little reading and prayer, so as to wish Florence God-speed—a proposal which met with general acceptance. So she read the ninety-first psalm, and engaged in prayer, first asking one of the girls to follow her. It seemed to Florence that Miss Brookland knew just what to pray for. Her petition embraced all the possible exigencies of emigrant life, and, looking into the future, anticipated the time when she would be far away from Christian friends and the means of grace, and yearning for the companionship of old friends. Above all, Miss Brookland prayed that her going forth from them might be the means of the conversion of many more. Florence was but young in the faith—only a learner in the school of Christ; still she was a Christian, and now her faith and love were to be tested by transplantation to a foreign And Miss Brookland knew that spiritual gifts and graces grew with use, that the one talent well employed expands into two; while Florence, herself, would gain in knowledge and faith by teaching others. And as the young girl listened to her teacher's petitions, it seemed that a new consecration was bestowed upon her.

After Miss Brookland had concluded, a little pause followed. It was only recently that any of the girls had prayed before the class, and, naturally, they were very sly and timid at the sound of their own voices. Three or four of them, however, had by degrees been brought of late to confess their love to the Master, and these Tuesday evening reunions had been the means of leading them to engage in open supplication for each other, so that this little prayer meeting was nothing new to them. Very timidly one of the girls took up the strain, and, in a voice tremulous with emotion, besought that Florence and her friends might be piloted in safety over the mighty deep, and carried to their destined haven. Then another, and another, followed in the wake, until all who felt drawn to do so had lifted up the voice of prayer on her behalf. Florence remembered those prayers afterwards when in the midst of storm and danger, and they served to give her soul confidence.

Then they rose and sung the dear old words—

"Blest be the dear uniting love Which will not let us part, Our bodies may far off remove, We still are one in heart"—

to a familiar tune, and Florence felt that, whether at home or abroad, in the city of Manchester or in the wilds of Australia, she could never forget nor outgrow the tender associations of the Sabbath-school. As they parted that night, perhaps never to meet again on earth, she resolved that she would do what she could to serve God in her new sphere of life, leaving all the issues of the future to His guiding mercy.

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Not many days after this meeting, as Florence was out making some purchases, a well-known voice accosted her with the usual salutations. On looking at the speaker, she could not but be aware that Mr. Lisburne was regarding her with most earnest attention, and the tell-tale blush mounted to her features under the young man's gaze. She had not seen him very recently, having been absent from

home during his last two visits—for Mark still made his way to Mr. Godfrey's residence at every available opportunity—but, as I have before hinted to you, there was a tender feeling in her heart towards the young man, although as yet they had not spoken directly of love. Coming across to her, Mr. Lisburne shook hands cordially, saying as he did so, "This is indeed an unexpected pleasure, Miss Godfrey. Allow me to accompany you this morning."

"Thanks, Mr. Lisburne; but as I have one or two more

calls to make, I fear I shall detain you too long."

"Oh! by no means! I shall be only too happy to escort

vou."

Florence's shopping that morning was not of the interminable order, and when they were fairly on the road home, Mark began to ventilate the subject that was troubling him.

"Is it true, Florence—this that I hear?"

"What, Mr. Lisburne?"

"You cannot doubt to what I allude—your emigration. Is it true that Mr. Godfrey has finally decided to go to Australia?"

"Yes." Florence spoke with a low sad sort of tone. Mark's presence had recalled in tenfold measure the sadness she felt whenever she thought of him.

"When do you go?"

"In about nine or ten days."

"So soon?" Mark seemed astonished at the shortness of the time which yet remained for companionship between him and his beloved.

"Why, you almost take my breath away; I had not imagined that you would have left Manchester so sud-

denly."

"But, Mr. Lisburne, if we go at all we may as well go now; what is the use of lingering when one's mind is made up? And father thinks it best to emigrate at once, so as to look about him and make purchases of stock, as well as to be enabled to secure what is called a good run, by the time the most favourable season set in."

"Florence, this news has come like a shock upon me, so you must pardon me if I speak out plainly. This is no time for hiding one's real feelings, for if half the globe

is to divide us, and our minds are not plainly known to each other, the chances are that we shall never meet again."

Florence grew pale and flushed by turns. She could not doubt at what he was hinting, and now that the decisive moment was drawing near, it seemed to try her beyond endurance.

"I have loved you a long time—longer, Florence, than you can imagine; only a combination of circumstances has kept me from speaking out. First, I was in bondage to my uncle; then, after being freed from his yoke, I had my own uncertain way to fight in the world. Then, again, there was my promise to your father not to enter into any engagement at present with you, nor even to seek your love. I would have kept that promise for some time longer, had you remained in Manchester-until, in fact, your father had himself given me leave to speak out; but under the present circumstances, I do not consider that I am justified in doing Florence, I want you to promise that you will love me in return, that you will be faithful to me in the new home to which you are going; that if I come out to you, which I shall do, you will become my wife. I cannot rest till you promise me this. The knowledge that you are soon to go away from me, compels me to speak out. Do the same with me; encourage me to hope. I will serve seven years for you if your father wishes it, as Jacob did for Rachel; only I must know if I may look for the reward."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON BOARD AN EMIGRANT SHIP.

"A toftening thought of human care,
A feeling linked to earth,
Is not you speck a ship which bears
The loved of many a hearth?
Oh! do not hope, and grief, and care,
Crowd the frail deck e'en now?
And manhood's prayer, and woman's tear,
Follow her venturous prow?
Therefore, amidst this wide array
Of glorious things, and fair,
My soul is on that ship's lone way,
For human hearts are there."

MRS. HEMANS.

"SAY that you do not discourage me, Florence," urged the young man, now fairly absorbed in the heat of his subject. "Give me room to hope that I shall one day call you my very own—my wife—to crown my home and life with your loving presence. Is it presumption on my part to hope for this?"

"No, Mark, it is not," replied Florence, while her blushing face told how deeply she felt the words she was saying. "I will not refuse your request."

"And you will be mine?"

" Yes."

Only one little word, but it changed the whole aspect of worldly things for Mark. He who was downcast and doubting before, now became suddenly jubilant and gay. It seemed as if the sky wore a brighter aspect, and all nature a fairer hue, now that he could assure himself of Florence's attachment.

"Then remember, that nothing shall separate us or come between us. What if you are in Australia? I can come out to you, and will, if there seem no prospect of making my way here. Anyhow, dearest, though half the globe divide us, we belong only to each other now."

"And your uncle?"

"My uncle has nothing to do whatever with my choice of a wife. I never expect to see or hear anything of him again; and as to being acknowledged by him in his will,—he told me plainly that he should disinherit me. But what does that matter? I have my own fortune to make, as he has done, and then I shall have to thank nobody but Him "who giveth power to get wealth." Our promises to each other are worth more than a mine of gold, and with the knowledge of your faithfulness to me I shall be prepared to do and dare anything."

"You need not fear for my faithfulness, Mark," returned Florence. "I shall never forget that I belong to you, wher-

ever I may be."

"Dearest, I could never entertain a doubt of you—I never shall. But now as to our correspondence. You will

write often—say every week?"

"Would it not be well to speak to my parents before settling about that?" said Florence. "I don't suppose that they will forbid our engagement, only I should like them to know of it before we sail."

"Of course I shall tell them of it," replied Mark, "and tell them beside that they must not be surprised any day if I come to Australia to claim you. As soon as I have made a position for myself, I shall look for your sweet presence to grace my home."

"In Manchester?"

"That is as you decide, dear. If I gain a position here, or seem in a fair way to make one, would you insist on my

settling in Australia?"

"I think we may leave the discussion of that matter until circumstances seem to invite it, Mark. At present neither you nor I have any conception of what the future has in store for us. But if it seem best, you will not refuse to settle in Australia, will you?"

"No, Florence. But have you any preference for that

course of action, that you ask the question now?"

"I can scarcely say; but it seems to me that I shall from this time forth live in Australia; I somehow have a presentiment that I shall not return to live in England again That is why I ask the question. But how are you getting

on at the infirmary?"

"Capitally. In some respects, the change was a fortunate one for me, as I gained a certain kind of experience which I could not gain elsewhere. It will, in all probability, lead some day to something better and higher. But our time is slipping by, and as yet we have made no definite arrangement about our correspondence. I feel certain that your parents will not put their veto upon our engagement; and, indeed, as to that, it will make no difference if they do, further than to delay our union for a while. Mr. Godfrey may rest assured that I shall never consent to resign you. You will write me all about your Australian life, will you not?—keeping nothing back, so that as I read, I may be able to see you in my mind's eye, and be in spirit with you."

Florence could not resist a smile at her suitor's earnestness. Judging from his manner, it was already a settled thing that he and Florence should walk the rest of life's

journey in company.

"Yes, Mark, I will tell you truly all my impressions and experiences of our new life. But I have a right to expect

you to return the compliment."

"Of course, dearest, you have. And can you doubt for a moment that my pleasantest occupation will be reading your letters and answering them? It will not be long, however, before we meet again. The time will seem an age until I claim you as my own. I shall see you often during the few days you still remain in Manchester, and with your father's permission, I shall run over to Liverpool to see you off. Then, I suppose, for a long age of toiling loneliness! Ah well! I must seek relief in the active duties of my profession, until I can hear from you."

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

The days passed swiftly by, as all our days do, when we are about to part from beloved ones bound for a foreign shore, and that of sailing arrived. Along with the Godfreys, who were just gone on board the Australian-bound vessel, Star of Hope, was Mr. Lisburne, for he had seen Mr. Godfrey on the morning following the conversation recorded

in the preceding pages, and had obtained his consent. And now, as he had promised, he was come with them to Liverpool to wish them God-speed and good-bye. But it was as much as his manliness could bear; while as for Florence, it was not until the separation drew near that she realized how much

she actually loved Mark.

But the time had come, and at the signal all the friends of the passengers were compelled to leave the vessel. Many would fain have had more lingering farewells, but the order was peremptory, so in company with many as heart-sore as himself, Mark left the Stur of Hope, having first pressed Florence's hand and spoken tender, reassuring words of Ah! what would the young do without the blessing of hope? Of all that Pandora's box contained, this was

surely the best and the sweetest.

But now the parting had come, and as Mark looked his last upon the receding Star of Hope, Florence waved her handkerchief to him, in token of her loving remembrance. How the crowd pushed and jostled as they shouted or wept their farewells to the emigrants! Fathers and mothers were there, bidding good-bye to children, friend to friends. wives to husbands, and children to parents; while with it all, not abating one jot because of the sorrow at parting which reigned all around, surged the wild, ceaseless roar of human life and traffic. People of all nationalities, callings, positions—mariners, emigrants, officials, "touters," lodginghouse-keepers, "sharks," thieves, loafers-elbowed one another on the landing-stage; but not one face did Mark know or care for. Florence Godfrey was gone from him, and he could only look forward to their meetings again at some time in the far-distant future. But it was his duty to bear the separation bravely; so buttoning his coat, and resolutely choking back the emotions which nearly mastered him, he made the best of his way to the railway-station. Once back in Manchester, he could to a great extent forget his trouble, though not his love, in the never-ceasing round of duties at the infirmary.

As for Florence and her friends they were fully occupied in observing the various incidents of the new phase of life, in the midst of which they were cast. The vessel was

crowded with emigrants bound for the great Southern continent, either going out to join friends who had preceded them, or to make a home for themselves in that strange new land. These last were in reality "strangers and pilgrims," and they showed it both by words and manner. A large number of the emigrants had never seen the sea before, and with half-frightened exclamations they pointed to the receding forest of masts which lay in the port, and commented on all the nautical sights and sounds which surrounded them, with a volubility which bespoke at once surprise and terror. These were continually getting into the way of the sailors, asking them inopportune and awkward questions, only to be unceremoniously snubbed or contemptuously silenced. But other groups inspired only a feeling of sadness. If for a little time the novelty of the situation engaged their attention, they soon recalled themselves to the ever-present trouble which was weighing them down. In one corner were a family of eight-father, mother, and six little children, disconsolate, cold, hungry, and weary. A crying babe was at the mother's breast, while two other small ones, scarcely more than infants, clung to the father's The pale, sad faces of the parents told an eloquent tale of hardships encountered here in the struggle for subsistence; but it was to be hoped that Australia would present more of comfort and less of care. Not far away were two orphan children-brother and sister-going out to some friends in Adelaide. As the poor, shivering, illclad children clung together, they looked lonely enough to touch any heart that was not of stone. It was, perhaps, the best thing for them—this going out to their colonial relatives; but a voyage of fifteen thousand miles or so was surely a tremendous ordeal to the poor little ones. So also was it to that poor widow in faded black, who sat keeping one eye on some trifle of luggage, which otherwise might have been appropriated by the light-fingered portion of the company, and the other on her three small children by her Confused, terrified, wonder-stricken, and weak, it seemed an impossibility for her ever to reach her brother's place "in the bush," to which she was bound. And as for the two forlorn spinsters who were going out to join a married sister at Melbourne, they were fairly petrified, as they gazed around, and viewed the conflicting elements of the society amongst which they must live for the next three or four months. A railway journey of fifty miles had been a formidable undertaking to them—how, then, about this dreadful voyage? You could make tolerably sure, from the expression of their countenances, that once this passage was over, no earthly power would induce them to repeat the experi-The only merry folks there were the noisy, volatile, restless, fickle Irish, of whom there were a good number among the passengers. These were not encumbered with much luggage, and squatted contentedly beside their belongings, viewing the whole scene with something like amused wonder. Yet with all their shortcomings, these Irish were of some little use in their generation. Actually, during the first hours of the voyage, and before the tears of their fellowpassengers were dried, they had started a dance, to the strains of a crazy fiddle. Fickle and changeable always, as an April day, they were equally ready for a cry or a laugh.

As Florence sat with the youngest of the children on her knees, her mind went back almost unconsciously to her last interview with Mark. She experienced the same kind of desolation in spirit that he was feeling now, as the train was speeding back to Manchester. That first love, which comes to young, trusting hearts, is so blissful a thing, that it transforms everything into joy and gladness, and makes each incident of our prosaic everyday life radiant with its own light. And in proportion to the joy of loving is the gloom of separation. Florence felt this, and in her inmost soul she resolved that if Mark was only true to her, neither time nor distance should interfere with their vows to each

other.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MR. LISBURNE FINDS A NEW VOCATION.

"OH! my head!"

"This way, my little fellow," said a cheery kind-hearted voice. "Look at me if you can."

"Oh! I can't, I can't; my head—how it aches!" moaned

out a weird-like child's voice.

The owner of it was a boy of about twelve or thereabout, brought in on the previous day to the "casual" ward of the infirmary. A brutal blow from a drunken fellow who stood in the relationship of father to the child, had knocked him down the stairs, and beside breaking his arm, had injured his head so severely, that at one time it was a serious question whether the lad would ever wake to consciousness again. Some neighbours who had seen the injury, had resented the brutality and inhumanity of the father sufficiently to lift up the insensible, dirty, little form, and, aided by the mother, had taken the child to the infirmary. Some leaven of kindness still lingered in St. Michael's Lane, in spite of the miserable condition of its denizens. The mother of the lad was a poor, puny-looking woman, terrified into a stunned sort of docility by her drunken, swearing husband, and in her secret heart she rejoiced when he was led off prisoner by a stalwart policeman, for the assault on her child. It was not often that policemen ventured down St. Michael's Lane, except in couples; but on this occasion the sympathy of the inhabitants of the dirty-looking dwellings was so manifestly against the almost murderer, that John Connor was apprehended without a hand being raised in his defence.

As Mr. Lisburne and the nurse raised up the form of the lad, they were astonished at the delicacy of his features and the purity of his complexion. It was so unlike the class of boys to which, judging from his attire and surroundings, he belonged. Fair as a girl, and with hair which was of the golden hue now so much admired, but which was even yet

clotted with gore, he looked too frail to be boyish, and Mark's heart quite warmed towards him as he performed the necessary operations for setting the broken bone and

binding up the wounded head.

"Try to open your eyes for a minute or two, my boy," said he. "Look at me now, and tell me how you feel;" and encouraged by the voice of the young surgeon, who, with a man's strength of nerve, possessed a woman's tenderness of heart, the boy tried to obey.

"You can see me quite clearly?"

"Yes, oh yes; but my head is aching terribly."

"I know. But how is your arm now? Don't move it,

but just tell me if you can feel it."

"Oh, it's all numbed, but it—the pain is better, thank you, sir."

"That's right. Now, what is your name?"

"Harry-Harry Connor, sir."

"Have you a mother?"

"Oh, yes, sir; and she'll trouble about me so. And now there's nobody to take her part, father'll beat her worse than ever."

"Take her part—what do you mean?"

Mark could not help smiling at the idea of a poor little ragged urchin like this boy taking anybody's part. He looked so helpless and frail, with his pale, thin face, and his closed eyes—the pain was too great for him to keep them open.

"Why, you know, when father comes home drunk—he's a dock-labourer, he is—he'll beat mother for anything or nothing. So I take her part and stands between them."

"Ah! then you get badly off, don't you?"

"Well, sometimes. But you see I don't mind getting the blows, because mother don't have to suffer then. I can bear them better than she can."

"And did you get these injuries in this way?"

"Yes, I think; wait a minute," and the child seemed to collect his scattered wits. "Oh! this was it. Father came home drunk, and wanted to know why it was that mother hadn't got any money for him. He had been worrying her before, that same day, for money, so she'd given him all she had, but because she had no more, he fell upon her like

a brute. Mother never stands up to defend herself, like some women do, so he pummels away at her until you'd think she'd die. Well, I got between them and told him to strike me. He did strike out at once, and I don't remember any more about it."

"Yet you'll have reason to remember it in another sense, my lad, for some time to come," replied Mr. Lisburne. "You'll be a prisoner here for a couple of months or more,

I'm thinking."

"Shall I? Oh! dear! dear! what will my mother do without me? There will be nobody to take her part now."

- "Possibly she won't want it for a bit. Your father is in custody, and will most likely spend more than two months in prison for this assault upon you. At least I hope he will."
  - "And does mother know where I am, sir?"

"Yes, oh yes."

- "Then," said the little weak, shrill voice, "may she come to see me? She will want to see me very badly, I know."
- "Visiting day was yesterday," remarked the nurse. "She can't come to see you till next Sunday."

"Oh, dear," groaned the boy. "I wish I could send a

message to her.'

"What sort of a message would you like to send?" inquired Mark. "Perhaps I might give it to her myself, if I knew where to find her."

"Would you be so good, sir—oh! would you?"

- "Yes, I will. Now tell me your mother's name and where she lives first."
- "Mary Connor; and she lives in St. Michael's Lanc. You'll find her, sir; everybody knows everybody there."

"Well, what do you want me to say to her?"

"She'll have no money to buy anything with, and I earned sixpence, I did, by holding horses yesterday; but I was saving it sly like, for fear father would get it from me. He didn't get it though, and I'd like to send it to mother."

"Where is it, my boy?" said Mark. "Tell me."

The young man's eyes were glistening with genuine feeling.

"Inside the lining of my jacket, sir; wrapped up in paper.

I hope it isn't lost."

The nurse produced the lad's jacket—old, dirty, ragged, and well-nigh sleeveless. It was pocketless, so for greater safety the money had been stowed away inside the lining. Wrapped in several pieces of paper it formed quite a bunch, and showed its own whereabouts to the searchers. The lad looked as keenly as he possibly could while they were finding the coin, and when it was found tears of joy glistened in his eyes.

"Oh, I am so glad you have it! It will help to keep mother for the next two or three days. She won't starve

while she has that."

Mr. Lisburne smiled at the idea of anybody's subsisting on what a single sixpence would buy for two or, perhaps, three days; but then he hadn't been obliged to live a whole day upon a penny roll.

"Now I will take it to your mother, as I promised you," said Mr. Lisburne, "and tell her how you are getting on."

"Thank you, sir; and—and, may mother come to see me

next Sunday?"

"Yes, my boy. Now you go to sleep if you can, and I'll tell her to be sure to come next Sunday." So saying, Mr. Lisburne departed, to attend to other sufferers who needed his care.

But when evening came he remembered his promise, and started off for St. Michael's Lane, bearing the precious six-

pence in his pocket.

Mrs. Connor was at home; indeed, she was one of those crushed, spiritless women who rarely venture far from home, and her husband's brutal conduct had still further contributed to crush her. She looked up almost fearfully as Mr. Lisburne crossed the threshold of her room; for aught she knew some further trouble might be coming to her.

"I want Mrs. Connor," said he. "Are you Harry Con-

nor's mother?"
"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm from the hospital, where your son is now lying."

"Oh, sir," she said, as if the news were almost too good.

to be true, "it's so kind of you. Do please tell me how my

poor Harry is. Is he—is he——"

"Yes, he is better," said Mr. Lisburne, answering the question which the poor woman almost feared to put. "He is better, and I hope will do well."

"Thank God for that," responded Mrs. Connor fervently; "thank God for that! It is more than I scarcely dared to

hope."

Mark loo'red surprised. He had scarcely expected such a spirit of thankfulness to God amid such surroundings. It seemed scarcely possible for religion to flourish in the dark hovels of St. Michael's Lane.

"I am come charged with a commission from your boy," said he presently. "He has sent sixpence for you, the amount of his last earnings by holding horses. He seemed to fear that without his presence and help you would not get on very well. Indeed he appears to be very fond of you."

"And so he is, sir, my poor, dear boy! Were it not for him I could scarcely have borne up so long. My husband is a terrible drunkard, sir, and sometimes ill-uses me dreadfully. Many and many a time I should have starved, had it not been for the little that Harry picked up in the streets, with running errands, holding horses, and such like. Ah! there's no other boy in the lane like my Harry."

"And how is it that he is so different from the other lads in the lane?" questioned Mr. Lisburne. "Is it because of

his love for you?"

"Yes, partly; but he has been so much better to me since going to the ragged school held in the next street—Black's Buildings, sir; I don't know if you know them."

"Yes, I know the place; but is there a ragged school

there? I was not aware of it."

"Yes, sir. And since reading the little books which Harry has brought home from time to time, I have been able to bear my burden better. Ah! I have a heavy burden, but the Lord helps me to bear it. And now I was wondering how I should manage to get food to-morrow; but you have brought me the means for to-morrow's bread and more. And when that is done, I have two or three days' charing to do, which will tide me over another week. So,

sir, I am not utterly destitute though very forlorn; if cast down I am not destroyed."

Mark still wondered to hear these sentiments from the lips of Mrs. Connor. There was evidently something more than he knew of behind the scenes—some hidden spring of faith and hope, which brightened her earthly lot, poor and mean though it was, and enabled her "to endure, as seeing Him who is invisible." So, sitting down on the one decent chair in the room, Mark drew from her the particulars of her condition.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## MRS. CONNOR'S TALE.

"The life of woman is full of woe, Toiling on, and on, and on, With breaking heart, and tearful eyes, And silent lips; and in the soul The secret longings that arise, Which this world never satisfies. Some more, some less, but of the whole, Not one quite happy-no, not one. Feeble at best is my endeavour; I see, but cannot reach the height That lies for ever in the light, And yet for ever, and for ever, What seeming just within my grasp, I feel my feeble hands unclasp, And sink discouraged into night. For Thine own purpose Thou hast sent The strife and the discouragement."

"Are you a native of Manchester?" said Mr. Lisburne.
"Oh! no, sir. I was born and bred in the country. It was not until we came to Manchester to live that my sorrows began. John was not as he is now when we lived at Horwell. But soon after removing to Manchester, he took up drinking very hard, and so we sunk down, lower and lower, until we are where you find us."

"What employment does your husband follow?"

"He is a dock labourer, sir; but he drinks his earnings away, mostly. Indeed, were it not for Harry I should be starved."

"How long has your son attended the ragged school?"

"About a year. Before that he was given to petty pilfering and lying, and so much so that I feared the result when he was grown up. And then, sir, the poor lad had not a good example set him at home. Many's the time John has sent Harry out to beg or steal money for his indulgence in drink; and if the boy came home empty-handed—which was the case sometimes—he was sure to meet with blows It would make my blood run cold to see it, and I dared not interfere to protect my own child unless at the risk of more violence, both to him and me. So you see Harry hadn't a fair chance to live an honest life. But I was thankful when he took up to go to the ragged school. came about in this way. He was passing by the door one winter night, crying with cold and blows—for he had come home without money, just before, and John had driven him forth into the cold and darkness, with threats that he should stay out all night unless he brought home some coppers and the superintendent, who was standing at the door, happened to see him. Taking pity on my poor boy, he invited him in, and placed him in a class near the fire. And from that time, sir, nothing could induce Harry to leave the school."

"And did he continue obtaining cash for his father's

wicked ends after attending the school?"

"For a little while, but not for very long, sir. What his teacher told him, was the means of working a great change in his life and behaviour. So one day, not long after, when John wanted to send him out on the same errand, Harry told his father that he could not do it, for it would be committing sin."

"How did your husband receive the lad's refusal?"

"How, sir! Why, like an enraged lion. Ah! he forgot that he once professed the same principles that Harry had now been taught, and with a curse at the name of religion, he felled the boy to the ground. Picking himself up, he said

boldly, 'Father, I can't steal any longer, and it is wrong to beg while we can work. Please don't send me out to do it any more, father."

"Well, then he beat my boy until I feared that there was no breath left in him. I rushed between them, and saved the poor child from further beating; but we both spent that night out of doors. I went back home in the morning, but Harry dared not show his face there while his father was at home for many days after. But he gained his point. Many and many a time since then my husband has taken away the boy's little earnings for indulgence in drink, but never a penny has Harry obtained by begging or stealing."

"And how does your husband view the change in his

son?

"With hatred, mostly, sir. I have not told you that when we lived at Horwell, John was a professor of religion. We used to go to God's house in company, for he was a good husband and father, and I believe loved what he professed. It was the drink, sir, that drew him away—the horrid drink. Coming to this great city was our ruin, for, after taking to like drink, John sunk by degrees into a life of utter godlessness and wickedness. It seems to me, sir, that a backslider always goes further in wickedness than anybody else."

"Did you make a profession of religion at the time that your husband did?"

"No, sir, but my life used to be very different from what it has been here, or even is now. Ah! when I was young I was a Sabbath scholar—ay, and a teacher, too. So was John. We went to the Sunday-school together, and at the same time taught the truths of the Bible to our classes. I can scarcely think of those days, sir, without a tear. We are come down—down to almost the lowest depths now; but the memory of that time will never die. Amid all the darkness and sorrow of the present, that time shines out fair and bright."

And as Mrs. Connor recalled the bright Sunday-school days of yore, she broke down. The big tears rolled down her cheeks, telling of the emotions pent up within the breast of the crushed and stricken woman.

"And now, sir," she continued, "do you think that my

boy will get over this injury?"

"Yes, I think he will; but his frame is too weak to do battle with such usage as this. He is evidently not cut out for such a life. I have been thinking since I have been here that I may possibly be able to help him a little when he comes out of the infirmary."

"Oh! sir, if you could, it would be a blessing to us both," said the poor woman, clasping her hands together. "We should then feel thankful for the occurrence, seeing that such

good was come out of it."

"Don't be too sanguine, my good woman," returned Mark; "I may not succeed in doing what I want to do for him. I may not be able to do much at all; but if I can possibly get a situation for him I will. And now, to whom can I refer for his character? We cannot do much without that."

"There is only one friend, sir, to whom you can refer, and that is the master of the school where Harry attends. He will give my boy a character, I know, if you will kindly ask him."

"I will. I shall make it my business to call in at Black's Buildings on my way back. Shall I tell Harry to expect you on Sunday?"

"Oh! do, please, sir. I shall long the time away till

then."

Mark soon wended his way to Black's Buildings, and, guided by the hum of many voices, found out the school. The institution comprised a day-school, Sunday-school, refuge, and dormitory, within its limits, and filled the place of home and protector to many scores of the stray waifs and neglected children of Manchester. As Mark entered the school-room, which just then was occupied by about a hundred children ranged in various groups around their teachers, a silence fell upon the company, and each one looked cautiously round to criticise the new-comer, as well as to hear for what purpose he had come. It was not an uncommon thing for policemen to come there on sundry errands of search, for young thieves guilty of petty purloinings; indeed many a time had one and another of the scholars been

dragged away in this ignoble fashion to the court of justice, there to answer for their misdeeds.

But Mr. Lisburne was a gentleman of the order to which the managers and teachers of the school belonged, and seeing this, the anxious juveniles breathed more freely. Many among them could not have come out of court with clean hands had justice dragged them there; but, on the other hand, it must be owned that most of their thefts were committed to satisfy the cravings of an empty stomach. It is no easy thing to keep honest and upright if hunger is gnawing at the very vitals, and the only home is the casual ward or the railway arch. And this was the case with only too many of the scholars, for the refuge and dormitory were too small to accommodate or to shelter the numbers which crowded into it. What is one institution of this kind among the superabounding vice, misery, and destitution of a large city?

"I wished to speak to the master of the school," said Mr. Lisburne, in reply to a question from a young teacher

near the door.

"I am the master," said an elderly gentleman, stepping forward. "May I ask the business which has brought you here?"

"I am come to inquire the character of a lad named Harry Connor, who, as I am informed, attends your school."

"Harry Connor!" repeated the master. "Has he not met with an accident? Injured by his father's violence?"

"Yes, the same. I am the surgeon in charge of the case at the infirmary, and I am anxious to get him a situation as soon as he is able to work, so as to remove him from the power of his father, that is, if his character be good."

"I am happy to tell you that it is very good, sir," replied the master. "For some months past I have marked with pleasure his steadiness and truthfulness among the other boys, beside his eagerness to learn. I have also ascertained that he has borne much ill-usage from his father, rather than do what he knew to be wrong. I am only too glad to recommend him as a boy deserving help and sympathy."

"Thanks," said Mr. Lisburne. "I am glad to find that

his mother's account of him is confirmed. I was not aware of the existence of this institution until she informed me.

You have a pretty fair number here, I should say."

"Yes, as many as we generally get together at one time. But to see our full numbers you should walk through the refuge and dormitory. These are mostly casuals, come for the shelter of the lodging in the dormitory. We only give that shelter to those who are perfectly homeless and who attend the evening school here. Our day-schools, both week-days and Sundays, are attended for the most part by those children who have homes of some sort, but who are situated like Harry Connor. Now, these children," said the master, pointing to the scholars as he spoke, "have had no food to-day but what they have managed to steal or beg. They are truly the Arabs of the city."

"And do you relieve them with food as well as shelter?"

"Yes; our rule is to give a supper of bread and cocoa, or bread and butter to each child who comes for the night's lodging—that is, if we can accommodate them at all. But sometimes it makes my heart ache to have to refuse poor little shivering objects when we are quite full. Many a time I have given such waifs a little food, and then have had to turn them out into the dark, wintry night. But our funds are so low that I am compelled to do it. We cannot increase our accommodation for lack of money, sir."

"What a pity!" replied Mr. Lisburne. "And do you

teach any of the boys industrial occupations?"

"Yes; oh, yes. That department forms another branch of the institution. In the refuge are about sixty boys and forty girls, who are boarded, lodged, and taught, besides being trained to earn their own livelihood. Most of our funds are absorbed in that work; but still we keep on, and we never find that our prayers for means are unanswered. But another great want—especially in this evening school—is teaching power. 'The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.' You see that these scholars are literally the off-scouring and scum of the streets, and none but those who work 'for Christ's sake,' will come to teach them."

"Would you have me?" said Mark, his face all aglow, and his sympathies excited for this new and strange work.

"Have you, sir! Yes, and gladly. We should be only

too glad to welcome you here."

"Then I will come. You may depend on seeing me here every evening that I can spare from my professional duties."

Mark had found a new vocation.

# CHAPTER XIX.

### LANDING IN AUSTRALIA.

THE Star of Hope arrived in port at last, and with a thankful heart the hands cast anchor. At last, I say, for several times during the voyage it seemed doubtful if they would ever see land again. Storms and tempest had beaten around the gallant ship, and for days and weeks they had been tossed hither and thither at the mercy of the winds and waves, until passengers, crew, and captain relinquished all hope of ever seeing Melbourne. But, good seamanship and a trustworthy vessel, guided by the providential mercy of God, carried them there safely at length, and the scenes and pictures of the new young continent at the antipodes opened upon their view.

While the Star of Hope was riding at anchor, and before they could land, they gained ocular demonstration of the fact that they were in a strange country. Vessels of all builds and sizes were riding at anchor, bearing flags belonging to every nation on the face of the earth. Even Chinese junks were not wanting to complete the scene; and while the younger branches of the family looked on with the deepest interest, revelling in all the strange sights and sounds which surrounded them, with that keen zest which belongs to youth, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey were speculating on the new

experiences which awaited them.

On board the Star of Hope was a young man whose brother

was engaged in sheep-farming in the colony of Victoria, and learning Mr. Godfrey's intentions, he undertook to procure him an opening in the same line as hut-keeper, in order to afford him an opportunity of gaining an insight into the It had not been Mr. Godfrey's original intention to accept a situation of this kind, but gaining experience by intercourse with some who knew Australian life better than himself, he found it would be best to enter first on a colonial career in the position of a servant. Mr. Bowes-his new acquaintance—had assured him that by the end of a twelvemonth he would have gained experience sufficient to enable him to take a "run," and in due time to make a fortune; whereas by entering on a sphere of life to which he was so obviously a stranger, with his old-country notions, he would infallibly lose all his capital, and in a short time find himself a ruined man.

"Welcome to Australia, the country of my adoption," said Mr. Bowes coming forward, as the city rose proudly before them. "If England is the first country on the face of the earth, Australia is not far behind it. She is a true daughter of Britain, and will ultimately rival her in the extent of her commerce and the magnitude of her cities. What are your impressions of Melbourne at first sight?"

"I can scarcely say. But I may say that I was unprepared for a city of such dimensions. It seems to bid fair

to outshine many an English one."

"And yet it has not been founded thirty years. Young countries grow marvellously quick. We colonials have new and vigorous life in us, and we outstep you old-country people in a little time. Tremendous fortunes are made and lost in no time, as the saying goes among us; and those fellows at the gold-diggings think, I verily believe, that eating sandwiches made of bank-notes is the correct thing. And the vicissitudes of fortune strike me more especially in a country like this, where people of all conditions are shipped off in order to make their fortunes if they can. Why, on my brother's runs—for he has two or three—I could point you to unsuccessful lawyers, a disgraced clergyman or two, a magistrate, and a medical student, all university men, who have utterly broken down in fortune, or in character,

and are glad to earn their bread in this way, mingling daily with some who are really the roughs of the country. One of these Cambridge men has lived for two years in company with a pardoned convict, and I think, of the two, the convict is the better man. You must not be surprised to find all kinds of people in the bush, and in order to get on with them you must try to accommodate yourself easily to circumstances. But wait here a few minutes, and I will inquire for rooms for you; I used to know of a decent place

about here before I went to England."

The streets were crowded, and, used as they were to the bustle and the noise of Manchester, this was something terrific. A seaport is always more noisy and rough than any other town, inasmuch as the traffic is continually bringing together the scum and riff-raff of different countries, and if the country happens to be newly peopled, all the vices of older cities soon find their way thither. As Mrs. Godfrey looked into the faces of the passers-by, she realized how lonely it was to be situated thus in a strange land; and at the prospect of living in "the bush" among people as rough and uncivilized as they could possibly be, her heart sunk within her. Lonely they certainly were, for, with the exception of Mr. Bowes, they knew not a soul in the country. He, with open-handed, colonial heartiness, befriended them in every possible way, by affording every information and advice, and now was about to gain for Mr. Godfrey a post which would give him a footing in the land. From that post it would be his own task afterwards to work on, by slow degrees, until he realized the fortune of which Mr. Bowes spoke.

"All right, Mr. Godfrey! It's all right," said the young man's cheery voice. "I have taken a couple of rooms for you, where you won't be cheated and fleeced out of half your belongings. These people are honest to the backbone; and your stay in Melbourne will not be very long, if all goes well. Still it will be something to feel that you have a home where you can rest quietly, even for so short a time."

The two rooms, though comfortable and snug, too much resembled the dimensions of the ship's cabin to be called a home; but it suited their pockets and at least afforded a

shelter. Besides, they were all too impatient to get to their destination, and to experience their new life, to remain contentedly at Melbourne. So the very next day, escorted by Mr. Bowes, Mr. Godfrey sought out Mount Rigby, the residence of the elder brother, in order to solicit the post of

hut-keeper.

Before proceeding, however, I must give my readers some information concerning the position and duties of a hutkeeper. It is perhaps the lowest position, with regard to pecuniary gains, which a man can accept, but a capital one for affording an insight into the management of such a "station" as Mr. Godfrey desired. It is, moreover, a station from which many of the wealthiest men in Australia have risen, and some are now in the Colonial Legislature who filled it not many years since. A hut-keeper's duties consist mostly in staying at home on the station, while the shepherds and herdsmen are out, distributing the rations, guarding and husbanding the stores, cooking the food, cultivating the garden, and finally, taking turns to watch the flocks at night, for fear of the depredations of dingoes, or native dogs. To take this situation on a run is to begin at the beginning, and the ascent is from thence easy to the acquirement of wealth in flocks and herds. A "run" is that part of the country which is owned or rented by the owner of those flocks, and over which the animals roam in One of these runs will sometimes inclose a search of food. circuit of a hundred miles of country, and such an one was "Wheeler's Run," that on which young Mr. Bowes had promised to get a post for Mr. Godfrey.

Mr. Richard Bowes was at home, and being an affable specimen of the colonial gentleman, was well pleased to talk over matters with Mr. Godfrey. But at the same time he cautioned him against expecting Manchester ways and comforts in the bush. "Do you know," said he, "what sort of a home yours will be? Have you considered that in embarking in this line of life, you will be leaving almost all the comforts of civilization behind? The fact is, you will have plenty of work, plenty of food, and plenty of fresh air.

Beyond that I cannot promise you much."

"Neither do I require it," replied Mr. Godfrey. "My

object in taking this post is to become practically acquainted with the details of a stock-master's life; and when I am fully up to the business I mean to invest my money in it."

"I see! You could not do better. Such a plan will save you the expense of an overseer. You could be your own overseer, and make a fortune while others squander one. Well, at Wheeler's Run you will find two large huts, one for yourself, family, and storehouse, and the other for the shepherds. There are two married shepherds on the run, with their wives and families; they will be your neighbours -though not near ones, I must confess, since one will be six miles away, and the other about three miles. Still, we think nothing of such distances in the bush, and your wife and family will soon get used to walking. You will like the run all the better, I dare say, for having neighbours, and in case of illness your wife would find the women useful. After all, a twelvemonth spent as hut-keeper or shepherd will soon slip away, and you will go into business on your own account all the better for possessing a practical acquaintance with the matter."

"Thank you, Mr. Bowes," returned Mr. Godfrey. "And

now how can I get to Wheeler's Run?"

"Very easily. Two of our wagons will be going up to the station in a few days, and you can go in that way, although it will be rather tedious—the distance to Wheeler's Run being, I should say, about two hundred miles, eh, William?" continued Mr. Bowes, addressing himself to his younger brother.

"Yes, I should guess so. I know it's a pretty smart ride

for me when I have to do it alone."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Godfrey," said the young man, when they were once more outside. "Let me prophesy that you have taken the first step towards making a fortune."

"I hope so," returned our emigrant. "But it's hard at my time of life to commence the world again. Still, for my wife's sake, I must keep up a good heart. Only I should not wonder if Florence and her mother do not find bush-life lonely."

"I shall like to know how you are getting on, and, beside,

it is best that one of the principals should show himself sometimes."

So, Mr. Godfrey and his well-wisher parted. Ten days after, he and his family were travelling by slow degrees up to Wheeler's Run. Anxious as they were to begin their new life, it was with somewhat of doubt and misgiving that they entered upon it. City-bred people do not, as a rule, take kindly to country life even in our own land-how much less, then, in the wilderness of the bush? That it could make people uncouth and rough, they had plenty of proof from the drivers of the wagons; though it must be admitted that, generally speaking, a good deal of hearty welcome lay underneath their uncouth words and manners. jolted along over the rough track-marks which the last winter's rain had made, Florence wondered how she could possibly be a missionary to such people. The very idea of doing good among the shepherds at the station was repulsive to her; but as she thought of the other men's families, she remembered that she could begin with the children, and possibly that beginning might pave the way for working among the adults. And from something Mr. Bowes had said she felt sure that he would be only too glad to encourage any efforts put forth for the spiritual welfare of the men in his employ. That William Bowes was a Christian man, their acquaintance on board the Star of Hope had convinced her sufficiently.

# CHAPTER XX.

## LIFE AT WHEELER'S RUN.

A COUPLE of long, low, roomy, wooden huts or shantics, by the side of a running stream, and surrounded by a cleared patch of land, on which were still some remains of what had once been "bush,"—this was the sight which first met the eyes of Mr. Godfrey and his family as they were put down

at Wheeler's Run. Five or six men, and as many dogs, turned out to greet the new-comers with hearty shouts and barks of welcome; for in these solitudes, human faces were rare sights, and welcomed accordingly. To the left was a long, low stretching belt of forest-land, furnishing both shade and firewood, to say nothing of the valuable timber which was procured from it year by year; while to the right were long plains of beautiful pasture-land, bordered and crowned in the distance by "everlasting hills." The sun was setting behind these hills as the company neared the huts, and our emigrants thought that nothing could have been more lovely than the haze, now golden, now purple, which his beams cast over all the face of nature. Certainly, the Manchester-bred children had never seen anything equal to it, and Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey almost involuntarily went back to the scenes of their youth—for they had both been brought up in the country—recalling with vivid remembrance the glories of the old farm and village at sunset It was strange that their earliest home should have been so present to their minds just as they were entering on their Australian one, but it was so. The mind will travel back, and the thoughts disport themselves amid the scenes of other years.

"A hearty welcome to you, mister, whoever you be?" said the shepherd, who was in temporary charge of the huts, and who, with his wife and little children, came out to see the wagons unloaded. "Guess you will find your life here pretty comfortable, on the whole. Nobody is ever sick here, and so nobody ever dies! You and yours have taken a longer lease of life, stranger, by coming out here—fact; you have."

And his jolly wife, who stood by his side, holding in her arms a fat-faced, crowing baby, while two or three similar specimens stood around her, was a good exemplification of his words. Mrs. Godfrey and Florence had not as many good looks—or healthy ones—between them both as this one woman had. Pale, delicate, and care-worn, they all told of their Manchester life, although the voyage had done something to make them more healthy than of yore.

"I hope so indeed," responded Mr. Godfrey. "It will be

something worth gaining to get fortune and health at the

same time. Are you in charge of the station?"

"Yes, mister, till you take on," replied the man. "I heard yesterday that we were going to have a new importation for hut-keeper. Guess you be pretty lately from the old country, mister?"

"Yes, just arrived;" and Mr. Godfrey commenced assisting the men in taking down the belongings of himself and family, while Mrs. Godfrey and her children put themselves

under the charge of the shepherd's wife.

"Sit down here, ma'am," said she, pointing to a heap of soft, well-dressed skins; "sit down here while I get you some tea. I expect you are dead-beat with the jolting of those wagons. I was when I first came. And look, here is a nice long stool for your young folks." The woman drew it out as she spoke, and Florence found herself seated, with the rest of the children, on a long, low stool or form, dame-school fashion. She could scarcely repress a smile at her position, nor at the primitive household arrangements which existed everywhere.

"Yes, I am tired, I must confess," replied Mrs. Godfrey; "but I do not expect my Australian life to be a bed of roses, especially at the commencement. The journey up here, however, has, I think, tried me more than the voyage

did."

"I expect it has. Why, I remember, ma'am, when I first came here I had two babies, as one may say, one in arms and the other just able to walk, and we were more than a week coming up here. Oh dear, I thought I should never get over it; but I did, you see, and from being a delicate, sickly woman I have grown into a strong, healthy one,

scarcely ever knowing an ache or a pain.

"You see, our tea is soon made; not after your old-country style, but as we make it in the bush. Look." So saying, the woman put a quantity of tea and sugar into a kettle, and hung it over the fire, which she renewed by casting on a few dry sticks. "I expect you'll find it strange at first, as I did, but you'll soon get to like it. As soon as the water boils the tea is ready. Now I'll get some damper made, and my husband brought in some mutton-steaks just now."

"Damper!" said Florence, in amazement; "what is that?"

"Oh, nothing but flour and water mixed together, and baked in a frying-pan. Damper is our substitute for bread. You'll find that queerer than the tea, I reckon; but unless you've got what English folks calls 'indigestion,' you'll not find it bad. We don't know what indigestion means here. But you'll not quarrel with the mutton-steaks; they're just delicious. But my baby wants to be nursed," she added, as the infant set up a stentorian scream. "Maybe, ma'am, you'd not mind holding him a bit while I get your tea? The men outside have not had theirs, so we'll all have it comfortably together, soon."

"And are those your staple articles of diet?" said Mrs.

Godfrey, as she danced the heavy boy on her knee.

"Yes, ma'am; mutton, damper, and tea—tea, damper, and mutton, all the year round, save and except the vegetables which we contrive to rear in the gardens. Now, here you have a pretty good patch—enough, I should say, to furnish a change of vegetables for most of the year. But still these things will be the regular articles of diet."

"But I should think you soon get tired of such a sameness," said Florence, who had never taken kindly to any pastry at all resembling this primitive "damper." "Don't you long for some good white English bread sometimes?"

"Not I, my dear. Time was when I did, I'll admit; but I very soon got to like damper as well as anybody. Our climate is so clear, and the air so bracing, that I question if you will have to advertise for an appetite very long. We all get as hungry as hunters, as the saying goes, in no time." And Mrs. Allen chatted away as she got tea, until one would have thought Australia a perfect elysium.

"And how have you found the country agree with you, in a worldly point of view—I mean as to money matters?" asked Mrs. Godfrey. "Is it as famous for ensuring prosperity as for giving health?" Mrs. Godfrey could not see any signs of wealth, either upon the woman or her children; but then in the colonies, above all places, one must learn not to judge by appearances.

"Yes, ma'am, quite. Many a man who has begun at the beginning, as my husband is doing, and blessed with pretty

good sense, has been afterwards a large flock-owner, justice of the peace, and, in many cases, has taken his seat in the Colonial Legislature. Now, I don't say that my husband will do all that, but I hope he will a great part. We have saved over two hundred pounds since we have been in the bush, and we have a flock of a hundred sheep running with Mr. Bowes' besides, so that the way is pretty plain before us. Once you begin making a fortune in Australia, it increases after the fashion of a rolling snow-ball."

"But is it not lonely, this bush-life?" said Florence.

"Rather. But we get used to it in a little time. Now our hut is over two miles from here, and our next neighbours are about four miles further on, so that I suppose you would imagine it to be a lonely sort of life. But, bless you—except in case of illness, and that has never come to us—we shouldn't find it so. I think nothing of the two miles, neither will you after you have got used to it, as I have."

"And how do you distinguish your Sundays from other

days, or do you make any distinction at all?"

"Scarcely any. We do know the day, and we don't do quite as much work that day as on the others; but that is all for the most part. Sometimes I get my little ones around me and read a little to them out of our Bible, as we used to do in the old country; but I am sorry to say it doesn't come to much. My husband is not a wicked sort of man; he'd like a little Bible-reading sometimes, if the others would join in; but, bless you, they smoke and sleep all the leisure hours of the day away. If I miss anything at all it's our English Sundays."

Florence recognized in this description of affairs a loud call to her to commence her missionary work. She had some books and Bibles, which Miss Brookland had given her, and it seemed as if they would all be wanted if she began to put forth evangelistic effort in this place. She could not see even the ghost of a book on looking round the hut. A fragment of a hymn, however, was pinned to the

wall, and in this little fact there was hope.

Tea was now ready, and Mr. Godfrey and the wagon-drivers were equally ready for it, so Mrs. Allen went to the door and summoned them in. Ranging themselves all

around the hut, the men accepted cheerfully the proferred meal, chatting the meanwhile over the news they had brought up from Melbourne. After tea, Mr. Allen explained to Mr. Godfrey his duties at the run, and led him out round the gardens, which looked more like a wilderness just then than anything else to his eyes—used as they were to trim plots and small neat patches of ground. Then the flocks had to be looked after, and watchmen appointed for the night, so lighting their pipes, the men walked away to these duties. But the Godfreys were too tired to go far, or see much that night, so very quickly they bade the Allens good-bye, and settled themselves for their first night in their new home. Thus commenced their life at Wheeler's Run.

## CHAPTER XXI

#### BEFRIENDING HARRY CONNOR.

"Go, teach the orphan boy to read, Go, teach the orphan girl to sew."

"Let us find our sweetest comfort In the blessing of to-day, With a patient hand removing All the briers from the way. Then scatter seeds of kindners For our reaping by-and-by."

"CAN I, sir? Oh, I should like that situation so much! I would do what was right in it, sir; see if I wouldn't."

"Well, the situation is vacant, and as I tell you, you can have it, if you can produce a character. Your mother told me that your master at the ragged school would furnish you with a character; indeed, I spoke to him myself about you. The best thing you can do is to apply for the place to-day, and I will go with you."

"Will you, sir?" and the boy looked the gratitude that

he could not speak, while Mr. Lisburne looked at him from head to foot, mentally measuring him for a suit of He knew, although the lad did not, that out of his pocket must come the cash wherewith to make Harry at all presentable at the warehouse in which the errand-boy's situation offered; and the first step to respectable life was to be inaugurated by donning this new suit. months, or more, Harry Connor had been an inmate of the infirmary, though not all the time confined to his bed. For the past month he had been up and about, only disabled, as far as the broken arm was concerned, and as he was merry and affectionate, he had made friends with many of the officials, as well as the patients. His mother had visited him regularly on visiting days, and although the appearance of the poor woman bespoke extreme want, she yet had always a cheerful word and a loving look for the child who was so evidently the pride of her eyes. John Connor was still in prison for the assault, expiating his folly and cruelty in the "hard labour" which was part of his sentence. To say that his wife had not missed him, would be only part of the truth; she had missed his brutality, most certainly, and had rejoiced for a time in the exemption from ill-usage which his incarceration brought her; but with reference to kindness and means of support, she had not missed anything by his absence. And better than all this, by the occurrence her boy had made friends, and was now in a fair way to earn his living honestly, as well as to be removed from the foul associations of St. Michael's Lane. Harry Connor was a lad possessing keen perceptions of truth and duty, united to which he had a deep, fervent love for his mother. What wonder. then, if in his anticipations of the future, he pictured himself being the real "house-bond," and his mother's staff in her old age. You must not blame him either if he longed to be bigger and stronger, so as to defend her from his father's violence, and even, if necessary, to take up the cudgels in her behalf. Still, it seemed almost laughable even to imagine the slight, delicate lad entering the lists against a strong, stout-built, determined fellow like John Connor. "Yes," replied Mr. Lisburne, as he concluded his inspection of the boy's garments, "I will go with you to look for the situation, but you must come with me first. And as I have an hour or two to spare, you may come now."

No sooner said than done. Harry put his old cap on over the remains of his former fine crop of hair, and his eyes sparkled hopefully from out the pale, delicate face. But hands and face were perfectly clean, and if the lad glanced at his clothes it was only to hope that his new employers might not look too critically at them. He had not reached the age at which lads are apt to indulge in pride of dress, and consequently, when Mr. Lisburne halted in front of a ready-made clothes shop and asked him his opinion of the various boys' suits there displayed, he looked completely taken aback. Much more so was he when Mark entered the shop and requested a smart shopman to choose a decent suit suitable for a lad of Harry's size. He looked and looked again, with a dim suspicion that the suit was intended for him. Yet still he would not indulge in the notion for fear of being mistaken. It was too good to be true, he thought, yet it was curious to see his face puckered up as he speculated as to whether Mr. Lisburne possessed any male relatives young enough to don such Next to the suit followed stockings, hat, shirt, and even collars and tie. What could it all mean? But Harry ceased to speculate, as Mark, while paying what seemed to his unsophisticated mind an almost fabulous price for the goods, directed him to go into an inner recess, and put on the newly-purchased articles. He looked up in astonishment and said, "But you surely don't mean them for me, sir?"

"Yes, I do. For whom should they be intended, if not

for you?"

"I thought, sir, whether you might have anybody about that size belonging to you, or no; I couldn't think, sir, as how you meant them for me. And please, sir, I haven't any money to pay for them, neither has mother. Only p'r'aps, after I get a situation I could pay you for them, if you wouldn't mind trusting me till then."

Mr. Lisburne looked amused at the idea of anybody belonging to him requiring his purchases of clothes,—he,

who had so lately been cast upon the world to shift for himself, although in a far higher sphere,—and the shopman smiled at Harry's childish earnestness. Evidently,

the gift was too good and too great to be real.

"No, my lad, there's nobody belonging to me, save yourself, for whom those clothes are intended. I bought them for you, and for nobody else. As to repaying me, you need not trouble about that, until I ask you. Now be off with you, and fit them on, without asking any more questions. There's your dressing-room, I believe, and be quick about it. If you are to go looking for situations you must dress accordingly, for people object to engaging scarecrows in their warehouses now-a-days."

Harry soon presented himself, clad in his new habiliments, his face all radiant with smiles and proud enjoyment. His old attire being rolled into a bundle by the shopman, Harry took it under his arm, and marched away with Mr.

Lisburne to seek his first situation.

"What is your age, do you say?" asked the gentleman to whom Mark had made application. When the couple reached his warehouse, and were closeted in the office with the merchant, the latter could not help fearing, from Harry's frail appearance and slight stature, that the boy would scarcely suit his purpose.

"Twelve, last birthday, sir."

"You are very young to take a situation-almost too

young, I fear, for my place."

"Please, sir, mother says it is a fault that I shall be growing out of every day. And I'm strong, though I don't look so. If you would only try me, sir, I'd please you—I'm sure I would."

Mr. Lisburne stood by, silently listening to all that was passing between the two. He had spoken to the merchant himself before, but now he judged it best to allow the lad to speak for himself. It would tend to make him more self-reliant and thoughtful. Boys who have to fight the battle of life alone, almost always excel in these qualities.

"And what about your character? You have not been

in any situation before, Mr. Lisburne tells me."

"My teacher will give me a character—he said he would."

"Your teacher! and who is he?"

"The master of the ragged-school in Black's Buildings. I have gone to school there for two or three years, now."

"And what did you learn there?"

"I learnt to read, and write, to be honest, to speak the

truth at all times, and to fear God."

"Very good. I don't know that you could have learnt better anywhere. I fear you are not strong enough for my situation, but nevertheless I will try you. Your duties are to be here early enough every morning to sweep and clean the premises before the clerks come, to answer the bell, and to run errands. At six o'clock in the evening your day's work will be done. For these duties I should give you five shillings per week. Are you willing to try?"

Five shillings per week! It seemed a little fortune to Harry, and he thought his mother would never be able to spend it all. Poor lad! how little he knew about the

exigencies of housekeeping.

"Try! Oh! sir, if you would but try me!" said Harry, his face all aglow with delight. "I'd work to my utmost to please you, sir. And mother would think I'd found a fortune."

"Is your mother a good mother?"

"Yes, sir, she is. I'd do anything for her. And if I don't work to keep her, she must starve. There's nobody now to work for her."

Harry did not say why his father did not work for her, but the merchant already knew. Mr. Lisburne had imparted to him the real state of affairs in St. Michael's Lane. It was to be considered a fortunate thing rather than otherwise that John Connor was in prison, for, had he not been, Harry's new clothes would soon have found their way to the pawn-shop, in order to satisfy the intense craving for drink.

"Very well, then, come to-morrow morning, and make a beginning." And with these welcome words the merchant dismissed the little fellow.

The first Saturday on which Harry Connor took his wages home to his mother was a proud and happy one for both. He with the consciousness of a newly-found industry, was all eager pride and boyish importance; while Mrs. Connor, with the thankfulness which is born of continued suffering and privation, felt a thrill of gratified pleasure as she contemplated her son growing up to be the pride and joy of her life. And we cannot blame her, for I think if any one on earth has reason to be proud of a high-principled, noble child, it is a mother. Harry Connor was this: he had proved it by his conduct hitherto, although placed in such unpromising circumstances; and, now that the tide had

turned, it had proved him the same as ever.

The school in Black's Buildings had reason to thank Harry Connor's mishap for the introduction of a good, whole-souled, indefatigable teacher. Three nights a week the young surgeon was at his post, surrounded by a little noisy troop of lads, who prided themselves on being as "sharp" as their teacher. So they were, in a certain way; but sharpness does not always indicate goodness, as Mark once found, to his cost. He had carried for two or three days a new silk handkerchief, whose bright-coloured pattern had attracted the admiration of the boys surrounding him, which admiration he, however, failed to note, in the way that a more practised eye would have done. On going to his home after the dismissal of the school, he found that the handkerchief was gone. On recalling the events of the evening, he remembered having it while at the ragged-school, and remembering the characters with whom he had to deal there, immediately concluded that some one of the class had abstracted it from his pocket. If this had been done, it seemed next to impossible that it could have been accomplished without the knowledge or connivance of the other members of the class: but then, the master had assured Mark that many a time the teachers had been robbed in this kind of way, one lad picking the teacher's pocket, while his attention was being drawn to the other part of the class, and the onlookers deeming it a point of honour not Yes, no doubt it was stolen by somebody in the class, but how to get it back again that was the difficulty. Mark thought he would try, however.

The next evening all the boys were in their places, and looked somewhat surprised as Mr. Lisburne took his stand

by the side of the young man who taught them on alternate nights. They very likely knew the meaning of the unexpected visit, for some of them nudged their class-fellows in a very expressive manner, and looked up expectantly for

what Mr. Lisburne was about to say.

"Boys," said he, "when I came here last evening, I had a silk pocket-handkerchief in my possession; when I left, it was gone. Now I have a very strong persuasion that one of you took it. Whoever it is that has acted such a thief's part, I pity him, but I will not punish him. I do not ask which of you did it, but I simply request that tomorrow evening when I am here again, you will restore it to my pocket. I will not try to see which of you puts it back; I will ask no questions, but I will trust to your honour not to do such a thing again. My lads, one of the first lessons you must learn, if you would get your own living, is to be honest."

Do you wonder that the handkerchief was restored? Mr. Lisburne did not himself touch his coat-pocket during the school meeting, and, what is more, he felt nobody else touch it. But, by some wonderful thieves' sleight of hand, it was put there; and, as the dismissal was being pronounced, he drew it out. As he showed it to the class, he smiled and said, "Thank you, boys. I knew I should

not have to ask you twice."

The boys voted Mark a "regular brick," as they went off that night.

### CHAPTER XXII.

### HOME AGAIN.

"Rocks of my country, let the cloud Your created heights array, And rise ye like a fortress proud Above the surge and spray.

"My spirit greets you as ye stand Breasting the billow's foam, Oh! thus for ever guard the land, The severed land of home."

"LAND ahead!" had been shouted by the look-out, and the land-odours which proclaim the proximity of terra firma had saluted the olfactory nerves of those on board the Neptune. A long and wearisome voyage was now drawing to a close, and the good ship was returning to port, somewhat the worse, it is true, for her knocking about in the Pacific, but with a little care and repairing, still seaworthy. And after such an eventful voyage—after being familiar with grim death, in the persons of their messmates—the returning sailors were not a little touched as they neared their native land. Some had homes where fathers and mothers, or brothers and sisters, or wives and families, waited and watched; and others owned acquaintances, who were to assume nearer and dearer ties. But ah! there were some homes rendered desolate by the "noisome pestilence," -some wives would see their husbands nevermore-some children who were fatherless, since the Neptune sailed away. And these would be eager for further information as soon as the vessel entered port—pressing around those who were spared to return for further details of the last hours of their beloved ones. They had been made acquainted with the bare fact that the yellow fever had swept them away, through officially-written communications from the firm; but these cold, dry sentences could not furnish much material to satisfy the yearning which exists in every human breast to know every little particular of the last hours of the As Alfred looked upon the nearing headlands and the shadowy cliffs of his native country, he felt older by years than when he had last beheld them. Knocking about among strangers, elbowing his way in the world among foreigners, living the rough, hard-working life of a ship's apprentice, he had found out that all was not gold which glittered. Before he left home he had been accustomed to regard a life on shipboard as a really delightful holiday, but his experience of life there had thoroughly disillusionized him. He had found out that he must work with both head and hands, and sometimes night and day, whether ill or well; work hard and fare hard, too, at times, though, generally speaking, the forecastle hands were very well off in this particular. Still with it all, he liked the sea. The free wandering life, the health-inspiring breezes, the contact with foreign scenes, all commended themselves to his boyish heart as things to be desired far before confinement in a factory or warehouse. Alfred's was the true British blood which leaps at danger and laughs at difficulty, which volunteers for the "forlorn hope," and places duty before life. Such characters suit a sea life; and though, as I say, the gilding was rubbed off, yet still Alfred Godfrey did not dislike the reality.

And now the anchor was dropped, and the Neptune lay moored in the Mersey. It was not long before Alfred found his way to the office of the shipowners to ask for leave of

absence.

He could not understand the long silence of his friends, except on the theory that they had emigrated. He knew their intentions before his departure, but, as I have said before, the uncertainty attending the movements of the Neptune after the advent of yellow fever on board her, had rendered it well-nigh impossible for Alfred to receive intelligence of their departure for Australia. However, a large sealed letter awaited him at the office, and almost the first thing the shipowners' clerk did on his appearance, was to give it over to him.

"There's something for you, young lad, left here by your father before he sailed for Australia. It strikes me that

you won't want so much leave of absence now that your folks are gone away."

"Sailed to Australia!" ejaculated Alfred, while the words

seemed to paralyse him. "Are they gone, then?"

"Yes, sure enough; and you'd have known it before only that we didn't quite know to what port to send the letter; so we guessed it best to let it lie by till you got back. But you knew of their intention to emigrate—so your father said."

"I did, and was almost afraid that I never should see them again in England," replied the boy. "However, if I

don't see them in England, I can in Australia."

"By the way, you are to be transferred to one of our Australian clippers," said the clerk. "Your father made it a special request when he brought that letter here, and

the governors acceded to it."

"Indeed! Then it saves me the trouble of asking," said Alfred. "I wanted to sail for Australia, if possible, next voyage. So I shall see them some time again, for certain. I suppose I could have a week's absence, couldn't I? I don't want any more, now that none of my own family are in Manchester. But I have some other friends there, and I think I'd like to see them."

"Come in by-and-by. The governors will be here then, and

you will be able to get your week's leave, doubtless."

Alfred withdrew with his bundle of letters, his face some few shades sadder than it had been during the voyage up Channel. Then the light of expectation had brightened his eyes and his heart; but now that he knew that one-half of the globe divided him from the old home-circle, his heart sank, and, boy-like, he began to feel deserted. How many times during his homeward voyage had he pictured himself the attraction of the whole admiring group, recounting his adventures in the Pacific, and on the South American coast! But the adventures would keep, and the recital must be postponed until the reunion in those far-off Australian solitudes. Just at this moment he opened Mr. Godfrey's first letter from Australia—in fact the only one which had arrived; and turning into a dingy coffee-house, he ensconced himself in the farthest corner of one of the boxes, and

while ostensibly sipping his coffee and eating his dinner,

perused all the letters.

There was one from each of the family, and an extra one from his father—the Australian one I mean. In it, Mr. Godfrey urged Alfred to obtain the fulfilment of the promise which he had won from the shipowners, and come by the first opportunity to Melbourne. Once there, Mr. Godfrey assured his son that somebody should come after him, and conduct him to their new home, or preparations should be made for his getting to them by one of the wagons which were continually going into the interior of the country. Mrs. Godfrey had also written her farewell to her boyjust such a loving, yearning letter as you would expect a mother to write to her son, upon the eve of her departure to the Antipodes, knowing that that son was at the very time of writing, thousands of miles away. There were sisterly and brotherly epistles also from Florence and the little ones, so that, what with them all, Alfred had left untouched the greater part of his meal by the time he rose from the The coffee-house keeper took his money and wished him "good day," feeling assured that the lad had some trouble on his mind, "for," said he, "I never knew growing lads to refuse their food unless they had something on their minds."

Alfred bethought himself of his old Sunday-school teacher, and as he did, a gleam of light rose upon his pathway. He felt sure that Mr. Lisburne would be glad to see him, and would prove a friend in this lonely hour. He would go to him, he said to himself; and no sooner said than done. So that evening, as soon as he received the week's leave, and with it permission to proceed to Melbourne in one of the firm's vessels in another eight days, Alfred wended his way to the railway station, and procured a third-class ticket to Manchester.

How familiar the old grimy, smoky city seemed to him; and with what a mixture of feeling he traversed the old well-known thoroughfares. Making his way to the house of a somewhat distant relative, who welcomed him very kindly, he spent the night there, and early next morning

set out to find Mr. Lisburne.

Knowing nothing of Mark's breach with his uncle, Alfred of course made his way to that gentleman's house. A servant demanded his errand in answer to his knock.

"I want to see Mr. Lisburne, if you please. Is he en-

gaged?"

"He is not here—has not been here for some time," returned the man. "Mr. Lockwood and he ain't friends about something, so it was best to part."

"But Mr. Lisburne was my Sunday-school teacher," cried Alfred, "and he promised always to be a friend to me if I

wanted him. Can I find him anywhere?"

"Oh! ay, he's to be found at the infirmary, I reckon," said the man. "If you were really one of his Sunday-school boys, I make no doubt but that he'll be glad to see you once more. It was about the Sunday-school work and such like things that Mr. Lockwood and he quarrelled."

"Was it, indeed? Well, I was in his class for years before I went to sea, and I have made up my mind to see him, for certain, before I sail again; so if you think he is at

the infirmary, I'll make my way there."

"He's safe to be there, my lad, because he's house surgeon to the infirmary, and they do say he's a very clever one. Anyhow, some folks thinks a deal of him, if his own flesh and blood don't. I always liked him, and I don't mind tell-

ing you so. Good morning, my lad."

Alfred was off like a bird to the infirmary. Many and many a time, when a lad, he had looked up at the building with interest, but never with so much interest as now. He half feared a repulse as he looked in among the group of ailing faces, clustered around the lobby doors, when, who should pass but Mark himself. His heart gave a great throb as he leapt forward, and something like a sob burst from him as he clasped the young doctor's hands, with the one word, "Teacher."

Mr. Lisburne looked at the young sailor lad for a moment in surprise; but as he saw who it was, the look of surprise turned to one of welcome, and opening the door of his own private room, he drew Alfred in and bade him be seated.

"I am glad you've found me out, Alfred. You must miss your home now."

"I do. I slept at the house of a relative last night, and made up my mind to find you out the first thing this morning.

"Quite right, my boy; and now that you have done so, I will spend all the time I can spare with you while you are

How much leave have you?" in Manchester.

"Only a week. I shall sail for Melbourne soon after, in accordance with father's request to the shipowners. I don't care for more leave, for I should only feel miserable here, without my own friends. But I knew that you would be glad to see me, teacher."

How naturally the old familiar name came from the lad's It seemed as if the memory and name had both been enshrined together in his heart, until they could find a fit-

ting expression.

"Right, Alfred. And how have you got on at sea? I understand that you had storms, and dangers of various kinds, including a visitation of yellow fever while in southern latitudes."

"Yes, we had, but I got on pretty well, through remembering your counsels. Teacher! your prayer for me just before I went away, and that dreadful time at Valparaiso, when my messmates were dying of yellow fever, were the means of my conversion. I went away a careless, wicked lad, but I am trying to please God, and serve Him now."

Mark's heart leapt within him as he heard the boy say this, and with a new emotion he requested Alfred to give him the particulars of the change. The lad began at the beginning, and recounted all the way which he had been led, through storm and pestilence, to the Saviour's feet.

particulars you have mostly been told before.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ON BOARD ONCE MORE.

"But an hour comes to tame the mighty man
Unto the infant's weakness; nor shall heaven
Spare you that bitter chastening. May you live
To be alone, when loneliness doth seem
Most heavy to sustain. When those days are come,
Then in your utter desolation turn
To the cold world,—the smiling, faithless world."—MRS. HEMANS.

Mr. Lockwood was not by any means a happy man. Mark Lisburne left him, he fondly cherished the notion that he would be well rid of a plague, and that Mark, after tasting what somebody has called "the sweets of adversity," would be only too glad to come back, and eat any amount of humble-pie, in order to regain his old position. was most woefully disappointed in each particular. not got rid of a plague, but most assuredly he had gained one in the assistant who had succeeded Mark, seeing that the new-comer was one addicted to intemperance, and held all religions in equal contempt, avowing most impudently his utter disbelief in everything pertaining thereto. He was so irreverent as to disown entirely any semblance of respect for others, in regard to their religious beliefs. sneer at the Bible, ostentatiously break the Sabbath, and indulge in profane jesting; consequently, Mr. Lockwood found himself made miserable by the very step which he had taken to secure peace. As an old-fashioned, quiet churchman, he hated this sort of thing quite as much as he did Mark's "fanaticism." Indeed, he hated it more, seeing that it inflicted upon him worse misery, both of a social and spiritual kind. And if by any fiat of his he could have purged his house of Henry Parkyns, and restored to it the presence of Mark Lisburne in one and the same day, he would gladly have done so. But it was not to be. Mr. Lisburne was succeeding in his sphere, independently of his uncle, and Mr. Lockwood must patiently endure the young sceptic's irreligious taunts, until he could replace him by some one

equal to the duties of the position.

Under all these circumstances, it was not to be wondered at that the old gentleman contemplated retiring from the active duties of his profession-indeed, leaving drugs and patients behind him for ever, for the quietude and peace of private life. His practice was far too large for his own single-handed capacity of work, and the bare idea of having to continue to cope with godless young sparks like Parkyns gave him the horrors. But like most medical men, he loved his profession, and the thought of leaving it, was to him, sometimes, like pulling out his right eye, or cutting off his right hand. Parkyns saw this, and thinking that if Dr. Lockwood retired he would have a chance to succeed him, insinuated one thing, and intimated another, with the view of hurrying the old gentleman on towards his decision, until Mr. Lockwood was wild, and sighed and bemoaned himself for the old days of Mark Lisburne's presence, with all his Sunday-school crotchets.

As for Mark, he had prospered abundantly since the day that he left his uncle's house. As house-surgeon at the infirmary, he had succeeded so well as to win golden opinions from his fellow medical men, and the grateful esteem of those patients who came under his care. In addition to this, his salary had been increased, and he himself was on the road to fame and fortune as fast as his own well-directed efforts could lead him. So it is often fulfilled, "He that loseth his

life for My sake shall find it."

Alfred Godfrey had reason to rejoice that Mr. Lisburne was in Manchester. His relatives there were not very near ones, and sometimes he would have experienced that "loneliness of a crowd," which so chills the soul, had it not been for his teacher's care and kindness. Charlie Capern, too, was at home still, and listened with open-mouthed envy to Alfred's descriptions of seafaring life. He spent many hours at the Caperns' house, Mrs. Capern having a kindly feeling for the lad who was, for the time being, bereaved of all home ties; and with a true mother's care, she overhauled his kit, and did his making and repairing during his leave.

This, as it may be imagined, was no light labour—boys who run wild, as far as the wardrobe is concerned, for nearly a year, being, as a rule, in a most sorry plight; and although Alfred had learnt to be handy with a needle, in consequence of his companionship with other sailors, there were yet many things which womanly fingers could do better. So the time passed by until his leave was expired, and on this, his last evening, Mr. Lisburne and Alfred were walking in the suburbs, engaged in low and earnest converse. Alfred liked such chats now; they were more to his taste than they had been in the old noisy, thoughtless, obstreperous times, when thoughts of God and eternity were as far from him as the North Pole from the South. His scafaring life had done this for him; in its isolation and its trials it had led him to remember Him who was a refuge and a rock in a very weary land.

"The most fearful time that I ever knew was that at Valparaiso," he was saying now in answer to a remark of Mr. Lisburne's. "If ever I felt desolate and forsaken it was then. With my shipmates dying around me, and not knowing whether or no I should live to return, I felt as I hope

never to feel again."

"And what comforted you in those hours of darkness?"

"The things you had told me at the Sunday-school. I knew that there was a God, and my Bible told me that He would hear me if I called upon Him. But for some time I had been ashamed to pray. None of the other hands ever knelt down to pray when they went below, and so I grew ashamed to do it. At first, I would whisper a few words of prayer after I was lying in my bunk, just to quiet my conscience, but then I would fall asleep in the midst of it, and finally I left it off altogether. It was like beginning a strange work when I first commenced prayer again."

"And when did you commence prayer again?"

"Well, I prayed several times while we were rounding Cape Horn. That two months of storm was a terrible time. I cannot tell you all the hardships we went through. One fared no better than another, for all of us had to work and suffer. Then when old Jimmy fell off the rigging and was killed, we all had to work the harder for his loss. There wasn't much time for prayer in those days—we scarcely knew what it was to eat or drink; but still several times I couldn't help sending up a petition that we mightn't all go to the bottom."

"And did you continue steadfast from that time?"

"Yes, off and on, teacher; but still not so earnestly as I did at the time of the yellow fever. Ah! I shall never forget one Sunday afternoon, especially. I took my Bible the very one that I used to carry to and fro to Sundayschool when in your class—and creeping up to a quiet corner of the rigging, I sat there for a couple of hours, reading and thinking. The bells of the Roman Catholic places of worship were chiming for service, and as I listened I wondered if I should ever hear the dear old chimes at Manchester again;—if you were at the Sunday-school, sitting in the midst of the boys, as you used to do; and then I remembered your prayer with me—that last prayer, you know, sir, just before I left home. You said, too, just as you were parting with me, 'My prayers shall follow you, wherever you go,' and the words rung in my ears that Sunday afternoon, and the thought cheered me. I don't know what else I remembered, but, anyhow, I felt comforted by it."

"And what then?" queried Mark.

"Why, then I was sent to watch with two of our hands who were so ill we didn't know which would die first. And one of them, the mate, asked me to pray for him. I did somehow, though I cannot remember a word that I said. When I rose up from my knees my legs shook under me, and my head seemed to swim round; but I never left off praying, night and morning, afterwards."

"And so, in seeking Jesus you found him?"

"Yes, sir, I found him. And I like the sea still, mind you; but I know that God keeps me in the hollow of his hand, and this gives me confidence. If I had thought of these things before I went to sea in the proper spirit, I should never have dared to go where life is in such daily danger, for if I had died as I was when I left Manchester, I should have had no hope of heaven. But now I know that God is as near me on the water as He is on the land, to

keep me, and to do me good. I don't dread God, as I used to do; I can think of Him without the old feelings of terror which I used to have."

"And the more you understand the Bible, the more you grow up into Christ, the more you will learn to love God's character. His fatherhood will seem ever-present with you -or rather, I should say, the consciousness of it-and you will be able to confide in Him all your heart's troubles and I don't know, indeed, how people can bear the everlasting worries and trials of life, without this Father-God to The world must seem a dismal place to such as have small comfort here, and no hope beyond. Why, I, in my position have plenty of cares and crosses to bear. Sometimes they come in the form of petty jealousies from my brethren in the profession, sometimes in the form of querulousness and ingratitude on the part of patients, sometimes in the shape of anxieties as to the future. Well, what do I do with all these? Why I just ask God to give me the rest needed by the weary and heavy-laden, and having done so, leave the burden with Him."

Alfred looked thoughtful. He had early developed into thoughtfulness by reason of his strong sense of religion. Had it not been for this, he would most likely have been reckless and wicked as many sailors are, only recalling the past to make it the occasion of a laugh or a joke. But his character had taken a new and higher tone, and as he listened he took note of all that was said, for would he not need all this when he was away at sea?

"You see, my boy, religion is such an everyday matter, such an integral part of our life, that we cannot but be influenced by it in everything—even unconsciously, sometimes, if we really possess it. It becomes a habit of God's children to tell Him everything, just as it becomes a habit with little children in this life to tell their parents everything. And so it is the most natural thing in the world to send up the ejaculation, or the short, hurried petition to times of danger and worry, as much as it does to offer the set prayer morning and night. Strive to grow into this habit, Alfred. Let your mind become habituated to the practice of telling God all; and the 'peace which passeth

understanding shall keep your heart and mind,' whether under blue and sunny skies, or in the midst of hurricanes and storms."

When Alfred returned to his duties he was the bearer of several presents to the dear ones in Australia. Of course, sailor-like, he had picked up many curiosities abroad, and had brought them home with him, intending them for distribution among the members of his family. But beside these, he took out to Florence a huge packet of school requisites from Miss Brookland, including spelling-books, catechisms, hymn-books, and Bibles; and a handsome green cage, containing a goldfinch, as a present from Mr. Lisburne. Said he, "It is an English bird, Alfred, and may remind her of the old times in England."

The little warbler so pleased the officers of the *Duncan* with its sweetly thrilling notes, that it was allotted a place of honour in the chief cabin during the whole voyage.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## A CRISIS IN THE CONNORS' HISTORY.

"Life is the hallowed sphere
Of sacred duties to our fellow-men;
The precious and appointed season, when
Sweet deeds of love the mourner's heart may cheer;
The hour of patient and unsvearied toil,
When seed from heaven is sown in earth's dark soil."

A HOSPITAL ward—long, bare, and filled with suffering humanity! There were two long rows of sleepers—or sufferers rather, for many could not sleep—and the nurses flitted to and fro, with quiet, noiseless tread, while the gasburners, which had been lowered for the night, gave the sleepers a wan, weird appearance. Some of the patients would rise up for a few minutes, leaning on their elbows, and

look round in a half-vacant sort of way; then falling back heavily, would again drop off into a troubled slumber. Among these sufferers was one who was nearing his end. That one was John Connor. How he came into the hospital, hap-

pened in this wise.

The denizens of St. Michael's Lane were accustomed to spend Saturday nights and Sundays, pre-eminently, in dissipation and drunkenness. At all times reckless, careless, and wicked, as the majority of them were, they yet gave a special license to their appetities on those days, and succeeded, generally speaking, in making the lane a place fit only for the abode of wretches such as themselves. poor souls, wives and helpless children, who were compelled to make the place a home, because of the crime or poverty of their male relatives, kept out of sight as much as possible, on such occasions, and avoided as much as could be all causes of offence, because of their desire to preserve sound bones in a sound skin. Mrs. Connor and Harry belonged to this class, for they knew by experience that with John Connor it was but a word and a blow when in his cups—though oftener a blow without the word; and so the two clung together for mutual protection, as people will who have no one else to cling to. It had been somewhat better for a little time after Connor had come out of prison. His incarceration there had made him for the time a sadder and a wiser man, and many resolutions of amendment grew out of it. Mary and Harry hoped that the amendment would be lasting—hoped and prayed for it; then with the united earnings of the father and the son, they might be able to commence a brighter career, and eventually emerge into that long-coveted respectability which had seemed for so long an unattainable dream.

But these bright visions were destined to be dissipated all too soon. It was too much for Connor to keep from the drink, and for him, to drink was to fall into the same dark degradation as before. True, he thought he would guide himself; but what drunkard has not determined the same, at some time or another? But while he tampered with the drink at all, it was only a vain idea. As well endeavour to stay the waves of the ocean as to say to an indulged appetite, when craving for drink, "Only so much and no more;" and

it was with John Connor a thing both morally and physically impossible that he should gain a higher and loftier manhood while dallying with the drink. So he fell again, and the same dark sad experiences were undergone in the home. Black eyes, bruises, semi-starvation, all fell to Mary's lot—though sometimes, when her husband saw the marks of his violence upon her for days and weeks, he felt some slight qualms of conscience, and wished he hadn't hit quite so hard. Harry came in for his share of it too, and would have had more ill-treatment had he not been away at the warehouse all day. But he had a difficulty in keeping his new clothes from his father's clutches, and in the end, for safety, slept upon them every night. Were they pawned or sold, he knew he could not be presentable at the warehouse, and then his situation must go.

One Saturday evening Harry had brought home his five shillings—out of which he had received the munificent sum of one penny as pocket-money—and was sitting by the dying embers, learning his lesson for Sunday, just as ten o'clock struck. His mother had been busy charring for a good part of the day, and since then had tidied up the humble room into the best aspect of comfort and cleanliness possible. Connor had not come home, and his wife and son knew by past experience that if he did not soon come his scanty earnings would disappear before his arrival. As they sat worrying over it, and yet trying to comfort one another, a bright idea struck Harry.

"Mother, suppose we go out to try and find father?"
"I don't know, Harry. He might be very drunk, and then he'd be angry with us for coming to look for him."

"But he might not be very drunk yet, mother; and in that case you know we could coax him home, and save the rest of his money. It'll all be gone if he stays till the publics shut up."

"I don't know what to do for the best, child, I'm sure. Well, let us try. Only, Harry, I should not like you to get such injuries as you did the other day. I don't mind so much for myself, but I feel the blows that you get, worse than I should do if I got them myself, I think."

"Oh, never fear for me, mother. I'll take care of myself,

and of you too. I'll coax father all I can." So off they

went on their exploring tour.

Saturday night in a low neighbourhood, amid the crime and vice of a large city, is no time to be desired. Then the passions of evil men rage rampant, and iniquity rolls down the street like a river. It was so when Mrs. Connor and Harry left home and emerged from the dark precincts of St. Michael's Lane, into the street to which it led. various gin-palaces of the locality were crowded with customers; old men and young, fathers and mothers, boys and girls, costermongers and beggars, ballad-singers and crossing-sweepers—all swallowing greedily the fiery draughts dealt out to them by the industrious barmen. Round most of these gin-palaces there was a small crowd—some of them were going in, and others had just come out; and ever and anon, as the door opened for the entrance or exit of one of the drinkers, the noise of tongues within added no little to the Babel outside. Fish-hawkers, fruit-dealers, matchvendors, flower-sellers, and others, distracted the attention of the passer-by. Every now and then a new feature of the scene would present itself, in the expulsion of some quarrelling, noisy drunkard, whose potations were manifesting their effects in his words and actions. The crowd would then gather round him, and applaud his curses with stentorian lungs, goading or taunting him on to the commission of his desperate threats. Or worse than all, the piercing shrieks of some drunken woman, fallen lower than the other sex, in her deep, dark degradation, would prove a still more powerful centre of attraction.

But after peeping into one and another of these gin-shops, Mary could not find her husband, and after nearly an hour's search, the two turned their faces homeward again. They had nearly gained the entrance to St. Michael's Lane, when a group of swearing, drunken, quarrelsome men and women, standing round some prostrate form, attracted their attention. Voices were busy in altercation one with another, while the cause of all this dispute lay unconscious on the ground. Mrs. Connor and Harry pressed up to the spot, and amid the din of a band of street musicians, endeavoured to listen to the quarrel. But all at once the group parted, and Mrs.

Connor caught sight of the man's clothes. With a scream which she could not suppress she burst through the group, and flew to her husband's side, Harry following her as closely as he possibly could.

"Oh! John!" was her first agonized exclamation, "what is the matter? what has happened to you?" But no answer came from the prostrate man's white lips, and she looked

wildly at the crowd around for an explanation.

"I don't know, but I think he is dead," said one man, who seemed to be a sober, well-spoken, working man. "How did it happen, Bill?" he said to another. "You saw him afore I did."

"Fell head foremost on the kerb," was the reply. "I saw him stumbling out o' that there public, not ten minutes ago, and I noticed then he was too drunk to go properly home. But, however, he went on pretty fair till he came to the corner, when over he tumbled."

The spot was an ugly one. A sharp, three-cornered stone reared itself up by the side of the footpath, offering a chance of danger to all unwary or drunken foot-passengers. This chance had come to John Connor.

"I don't know about his being dead," said another; "but

he has an ugly look about him."

"Look!" said the first speaker, "he is breathing. I'm sure of it. The best thing would be to take him to the

hospital. He'd be looked after there."

By this time two policemen had come up, and making way for themselves, were close beside Mary and her husband. She, poor soul, was weeping bitterly, and was utterly unable to make the policemen comprehend the meaning of it all. She forgot the black eyes, the cruel bruises, the bitter oaths, the evil treatment to which this man had subjected her day by day, in the presence of this great misfortune. She only knew that her husband lay there unconscious, perhaps dead, and the forgiveness which ever lives in the heart of a woman welled up in hers.

By degrees the police-officers grew to understand the state of affairs, and one of them went off for a stretcher, while the other remained by the miserable form. In a few minutes the stretcher was brought, and the poor fellow being lifted upon it, manifested his partial sensibility by

two or three groans.

"The General Hospital," said one of the police-officers, who took the lead. "They will take him into the accident ward at once."

Off the procession started, the policemen clearing the way, and Mary and Harry keeping close to the bleeding On examination at the hospital it was found that Connor's skull was fractured, and the doctors held out but little hope to the anxious, weeping wife, who remained during the examination. John lay in a kind of heavy stupor, from which it was exceedingly doubtful whether he would ever awaken. It was more than midnight when Mrs. Connor and Harry left the accident ward, and wended their way home in sadness and trouble enough. Little slumber and much sorrow was the portion of the Connors that True, Harry slept at last, for it is the privilege of youth to sleep, even in the midst of trouble; but Mrs. Connor did not close her eyes. The years of her married life-long, though not very many-had been weary, trying years to her, and had left their impress upon heart and life; but now all her manifold troubles seemed welded into one. Mrs. Connor shuddered as she remembered the future of her husband, supposing he should die in his present state. No word of penitence or contrition, much less of prayer, had crossed his lips for years—how, then, could he face eternity? And in the dark, still night, as still as the revellers around would allow it to be, she sent up her petitions for her husband.

The next day Mrs. Connor went to see her husband, and the next, and the next, and the next, but little improvement was to be seen. Still, he was conscious at times, and this was no small thing; but recovery was quite out of the question. The medical men shook their heads, and if ever Mary's hopes were raised by a little gleam of sunshine, they were as quickly dashed again by her husband's relapse into muttering delirium or heavy stupor. Thus did the days go on, until not only his days but his hours drew near the end.

### CHAPTER XXV.

### A NIGHT IN A HOSPITAL.

"So late! so late! and dark the night and chill; The day is past, but we may enter still. "Too late! too late! ye cannot enter now."

So late! so late! and dark and chill the night, Oh! let us in, that we may find the light. 'Too late! too late! ye cannot enter now.'

Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?

Oh! let us in that we may kiss His feet.

'Too late! too late! ye cannot enter now.'"—TENNYSON.

So, as I said, John Connor's hours were numbered, and it was very evident that he would not be long an inhabitant of this world. He lay among the rest, in one of the lines of beds stretching down through the ward, only distinguished from his fellow-sufferers by the fact that around his bed was drawn a folding screen, inside which a nurse was about to keep vigil beside the dying man. That ward was always a dim dismal kind of place, even by daylight; but by night, when pain and suffering seemed to be doing its very worst to rack the body and torture the soul, it was a hundred times more dismal. Some of the sufferers moaned and tossed restlessly in their sleep, as they thought upon their firesides again, and walked once more with their friends in dream-land. With others, memory was very busy, pointing with its stern finger to the silent past—raising the ghosts of former days, and recalling what might have been, as well as what had been. Could you have looked into the anguished faces of some of these, you would have seen that the memories of other times were not such as to prove either pleasant or profitable; and could John Connor have recalled the past with any coherence, he would have been among this latter But he was only conscious at uncertain intervals; the grim shadow of death was enveloping him, and amid its gloom and uncertainty you looked in vain for the light of one cheering beam of hope.

Mary and Harry Connor had seen him for the last time; that night, contrary to the hospital regulations, the nurse in charge of the ward had allowed them a few minutes by the bedside of the dying man; and once and again during the interview they had tried to awaken some gleam of consciousness in Connor's mind, and to obtain a few words from him indicative of the state of his feelings; but in vain. bodily anguish was great, but the mental darkness was greater. Mary knew that he was not ignorant of things divine—in past years he had delighted in them, but the light within him had become darkness, and according to Inspired Writ, when this takes place, "how great is this darkness." In response to his wife's inquiries he only moaned, and groaned, and tossed, or looked half-wonderingly at her, as if her words disturbed him. The nurse, who was standing near, said, as she observed Mrs. Connor's anxiety, "I wouldn't say any more, if I were you, ma'am. It seems to me that he's pretty nigh past it all. It will only disturb him and put him into greater pain."

"Oh, my poor husband!" groaned Mary. "If I could but think there was any ground of hope for him, I wouldn't trouble; but it's the life to come! Do you think there is any hope of his recovery? Can you give me any encourage-

ment at all?"

"We can't tell, you know. As long as there is life there is hope. It is a bad case, certainly; but I would hope for the best if I were you." The nurse spoke evasively, because she did not want to confirm Mary's fears; but in her heart she knew that John Connor was a dying man.

"I don't say that he has been what he ought to me, at all times," said Mary; "but I'd give the world to see him strong and well again. If the Lord would but raise him up once more, perhaps he'd be a different man. Oh! I think he would. And if he could but offer a prayer for himself, it wouldn't seem so terrible."

But he could not. He lay, prostrate and insensible, only drifting helplessly and unconsciously down to the rapids of death. Once there—once in the "swellings of Jordan," what would he do then?

"Sometimes a change comes for the better, before death

—I mean as regards sense," said the nurse, "and then he may be able to pray. Anyhow, if it should be so, I'll put him in mind of it, as I'm going to watch in the ward to-night. But you see it's getting late, though I don't like to hurry you, and maybe the other patients will get disturbed. We find it best not to disturb them at night, or some of them would suffer very much." And the nurse looked round at the long rows of invalids, some of whom were excitedly watching the group, while others had sunk into feverish slumber.

With one last kiss, and with many tears, Mary and her boy wished the insensible husband and father farewell, and then left the ward. After they had gone, the nurse, who was a compassionate, sensible kind of woman, arranged the things for the night, made up the fire, set medicines in order, stealing quietly about in her carpet slippers, and finally drawing the folding screen closer around the bed, ensconced herself by the bedside of "number twenty-four" (for by that number was the dying man known in the ward), to wait and to watch for the end.

The streets outside grew quieter by degrees, and the chiming of the nearer church clocks could be distinguished above the subdued hum, which had succeeded the daylight roar, as they struck the quarters. A few belated vehicles, and footfalls of pedestrians hurrying homeward through the night, were all that broke the silence out of doors; and indoors, balmy sleep was stealing over the sick men. As I said, the ward was a dismal kind of place, especially by night; but the nurse was so used to it, that she thought little of it, and indeed felt in her element, as she sat there, doing a bit of sewing for herself in order to keep awake.

One, two o'clock drew on, and scarcely any perceptible change had appeared in Connor's face. But between two and three, he seemed to rouse a little, and opening his eyes, looked around him. The nurse rose, and by so doing,

attracted his attention.

"Where am I, and who are you?" Conscious rational questioning had taken the place of the incoherent ramblings of the past. It was as the nurse had predicted; reason had gathered strength for one last effort, before the end arrived.

"You are in the hospital, and I am your nurse. Take some of this medicine; it will do you good."

He drank it off; but as he did so, a faint feeling stole

over him, and he seemed to recognize his danger.

"What is it wrong with me? Am I dying? Tell me, quick."

"You may not recover. If I were you, I'd try to pray. Ask God to pardon your sins, and take you to heaven."

"Oh, my head!" Reason was staggering upon her throne again, and the half-conscious man was relapsing into unconsciousness. But he did just wail out, as if he partly realized his position and his danger, "Oh God, pardon me! Lord, have mercy upon me!" and then the next minute was mut-

tering inaudibly to himself.

There was no more opportunity for exhortation or prayer. A stupor came over him, and in this state he continued till morning broke, when he passed away. While the people of the city were awakening to their daily avocations, the soul of Number Twenty-four went forth shivering to its unknown fate. The nurse quietly watched till the end, and then, after the doctor had satisfied himself that the man was indeed dead, had the corpse shifted in the usual business-like manner to the mortuary, where it was attired for its pauper grave.

As soon as Mary could obtain admittance, she made her way to the hospital. The first person that accosted her was

the nurse, who had watched by her husband.

"How is John-my husband? Is he?-is he?-"

"Dead, ma'am; died at break of day. Don't take it so much at heart, my poor woman," she said as Mary burst into tears. "It's all for the best, I daresay, only we can't see it at the time."

"No, no! it can't be for the best!" cried the poor woman in her agony. "There is no hope in his death—none. How can it be for the best?—and he used to love holy things, though he was such a wicked man of late. If he had died years ago, I should have had hope in his death, but there is none now. Can I see his body?"

"Do you think you can bear it? Suppose you let it stay

till to-morrow."

"No, I think I can bear it now. I would like to look upon his face again."

So in they went, into the mortuary, where was another corpse beside John Connor's. As the nurse turned back the covering, Mary leaned down, and with streaming tears, imprinted a kiss upon the still white lips. Only one favour she asked, could Harry see his father on the following day? The nurse assented to the request, and Mary returned home to brood and weep over her widowed desolation. How true it is that even a bad husband is sorely missed! and how death swallows up the remembrance of past unkindnesses and shortcomings! Somehow, as we stand and look upon the dead faces of those with whom we have walked and talked, we forget all that we had against them—all their faults and follies; and, forgetting, we forgive. Then every act of kindness, every word of love, every affectionate or lovely trait of character comes back to our remembrance adorned with fresh beauty, and we mourn for the good which we have lost. So it was with Mrs. Connor.

Harry saw his father's remains next day, and within a day or two followed them, in company with his mother, to the grave. John Connor was buried, as I have said, in a pauper's grave, with scant respect or ceremony. This sunk deeply into the boy's heart, and by his father's grave he resolved to rise into a different life—loftier and purer in its aims and purposes. Harry was of an age to lay these lessons to heart; his cheek had often crimsoned at the epithet "drunkard's child," while he had known what it was to go hungry and ill-clad, despised by respectable well-to-do people, on account of his father's habits. How he resolved to cheer and comfort his mother in her desolation, I cannot tell you. The sequel will prove.

Mrs. Connor grieved for her husband sorely. As she said to Harry, the same evening, while they sat talking together by the fire, "I would have worked my fingers to the bone for him, and have waited upon him night and day cheerfully, had he suffered a long illness. He would have had an opportunity then to seek God; and, maybe, the Lord would have been gracious to him. But now we have no

hope, Harry, no hope." And the tears streamed down her face afresh.

"Mother, don't grieve," replied Harry. "I know you cannot help feeling father's death, but it would be best for you to leave his state, now. You don't know—perhaps God might have forgiven father on his death-bed. You prayed for him, mother, a great deal, and you believe that prayer is answered, don't you?"

"Yes, certainly, Harry. But I fear your poor father did not pray for himself. And I cannot look upon him as safe, unless he had prayed for himself. Beside that, he was once a good, loving husband, and now that he has gone, only the memory of those past happy times comes back to me. I can

forget and forgive all the rest."

"You have me, mother," persisted the lad, "and you will not have to fight for yourself. Mr. Stephenson likes me, and I am getting on first-rate in my situation. I shall soon have higher wages, and you shall have them all, mother; I'll stick to you as long as I live, and work for you too, so that you shan't go out charing much longer. Beside that, we will move into better lodgings, away from this low neighbourhood. We shall be able to manage it, when I have a little more wages. Only, don't give way to trouble too much, for you have me left, mother, and you know you have God, always."

And Harry Connor was a comfort to his mother. Along with true filial feeling, he united sterling principle, and a proper degree of self-respect. Endeavouring to do his duty to the best of his ability in his situation, he rose in his master's esteem, until the wages that he earned were sufficient to maintain himself and his mother, along with her gains by her labour as charwoman, in a moderate degree of comfort. It is sad to be compelled to say so, but the removal of John Connor from his home and family was like the removal of an incubus from their midst. Comfort and peace came to them from the fact of his being absent.

## CHAPER XXVI.

#### A RAGGED SCHOOL HOLIDAY.

"Tis strange how thought upon a child Will like a presence sometimes press, And when his pulse is beating wild, And life itself is in excess; When foot, and hand, and ear, and eye, Are all with ardour straining high, How in his heart will spring A feeling, whose mysterious thrall ls stronger, sweeter far than all; And on its silent wing, Ilow with the clouds he'll float away, As wandering and as lost as they."—WILLIS.

THE neighbourhood of Black's Buildings was all astir with excitement, and groups of eager spectators discussed the day and its possible occurrences with keen zest. scholars at the Ragged School were to have a day's outing, which outing not only included all the residents in the institution, but also those who attended for instruction during the week. And as most of the surrounding alleys and lanes sent forth its younger members to the school, each of these places now furnished its own special detachment of onlookers to see the start. The children were to have a day's outing in Bramley Park, and were to be supplied with an abundant luncheon, and tea, beside unlimited enjoyments in the shape of games and sports. For days and weeks the children of the locality had been full of the coming holiday, talking and speculating about it, as only those children can speculate who have but one day's enjoyment of country scenery during the year. As a natural consequence, there was a pretty large class of street arabs who sought admission just for the sake of the treat; but the rule which enforced regular attendance for at least a month before the event came off, was stringently carried out, and so the company was weeded of certain wanderers who would otherwise have

gained a day's enjoyment, and then have returned to their favourite Sabbath pastimes in the gutter and the lane, utterly careless of the religious teaching furnished at the school. A large group of these stood, or lounged, outside the school, discussing the day's prospects and engagements in the true "sour grapes'" spirit; but undeterred by them, the regular members of the school poured in one after the other, and ranged themselves in their proper The teachers were all there—even our friend, Mr. Lisburne, managed to snatch a day from his duties; but notwithstanding, the hubbub, and clatter, and noise of tongues were something tremendous, even for the longsuffering master of the institution. Once and again his shrill whistle sounded through the din, calling for silence, but who ever knew a company of children gathered together for pleasure to be quiet? So apparently thought the teachers, for beyond keeping their own special flocks together, they attempted to do very little towards quelling the noise.

Hurrah! Here come the wagons, specially chartered for the day; as they draw up outside the school the loungers and gossipers move a little nearer; while inside, the hum and roar grows louder, as the secretary proceeds to call over the roll, before starting. It was not likely that anyone who was not really downright sick would stop away, and at first sight, no absentees could be thought of; but the tell-tale

roll soon revealed the fact that there were some.

"Tommy Shirley; where is Tommy Shirley?" repeated the secretary's voice. He was one of the missing ones, and

nobody seemed to know anything of him.

"Please, sir, last night he were a talking about the treat, and he said as how he couldn't come, 'cause he'd got no boots,' said one urchin.

"No boots; but he had boots on last Sunday—a very

good pair too!"

"Yes, sir. But please, sir, p'r'aps his sister can tell all

about it."

Hereupon a dark-eyed, ragged-haired damsel of some seven or eight summers was pushed forward to explain the reason of her brother's non-appearance. She had evidently been dressed up for the occasion with special pains, and the

result was not unpicturesque, inasmuch as she rejoiced in boots a world too big for her, a cape belonging to somebody of adult size, and a hat nearly crownless. She had on a clean pinafore, however, and this part of her attire was evidently a great comfort to her.

"What has become of your brother? How is it he's not

here to-day?" asked Tommy's teacher.

"Please, sir,—please, sir, father took the boots away."

"Took them away! What for?"

"Please, sir, father took them to uncle's to pawn for drink." No very great degree of shamefacedness or embarrassment attended this declaration, because at the Shirleys' home visits to the pawnshop were no uncommon things.

"Pawned for drink, indeed! And where is your brother

now?"

"At home, sir, crying. He's been crying all night, and he would have come without the boots, only that the boys would laugh at him."

"How much were they pawned for,—do you know?"

"A shilling, sir. Mother got the ticket from father, 'cause

she'll try to take them out again afore Sunday."

"Here, then, take this shilling, and run to your mother quickly, and ask her to get Tommy's boots out of pawn at once so that he can come with us. Mind that you and Tommy are both here in twenty minutes. Now run!"

Off the little harum-scarum damsel dashed, and while absent on her errand the remainder of the list was gone through. Then, class by class, each was marshalled out of the room and into the capacious wagons, which had been decorated for the occasion by festoons of laurels and flags. Just as the last consignment of children were lifted up, Mrs. Shirley appeared upon the scene, running breathlessly up, holding Tommy with one hand and his sister with the other. Tommy's face was not clouded with tears now, for smiles danced upon it in quick succession, as the happy scene unfolded itself before him. The foremost wagon was moving off as Mrs. Shirley's shrill voice rose above the din, in her fear that her children would be left behind.

"Here they be, sir! Here they be! Oh, please let 'em

go, 'cause 'twasn't their faults that they are late."

In response to her call, Mr. Lisburne stepped forward, and deposited them in one of the hinder wagons, by the side of Harry Connor. All the occupants of this wagon were lads of from twelve to fifteen, and at first sight they looked scornfully at the two ragged specimens which Mr. Lisburne put up amongst them; but he caught sight of the expression on their faces, and said in his own cheery way, "All right, boys! You will take care of these two little ones for me till we get to Bramley Park, won't you!"

"All right, teacher!" responded the boys. "We'll look after them." It was always the way with Mr. Lisburne and his boys. He used such infinite tact in dealing with them that whether he asked of them things disagreeable or otherwise, he always succeeded in winning a hearty assent.

It was so in this case.

"Your children were just in time," said another mother, who was standing watching the cavalcade, which was now quickly moving off amid a chorus of cheers from the children.

"A little bit later and they'd have been left behind."

"You're right, it was a near chance. It's all along of my Dick—a drunken good-for-nothing. He came home last night mad for drink, and because he could get nothing else, he pitched upon poor Tommy's boots and carried them off. It's a downright shame; and I worked hard for them boots, I did."

"But you've got them out again, haven't you!"

"Yes. Tommy cried all night because he couldn't come to-day to the outing, and I worried my brains to see if I could raise a shilling, but I couldn't. So I was glad enough to go and take them out of pawn with the shilling Tommy's teacher sent. And didn't our Tommy rejoice, that's all!"

"I'd take good care Shirley shouldn't pawn them again. It would be too bad after the gentleman found the money

to take them out once."

"No fear! Tommy will put them under his mattress at

night after this."

By this time the street was cleared, the schoolroom locked up, and the idlers began to disperse. Mrs. Shirley and her neighbour—who, by the way, held a crowing baby—also discovered that they had duties at home which demanded their attention, and imitated the example of the other onlookers. There would be another bit of excitement in the evening when the children returned.

The day was a glorious one. All nature seemed to be vocal with a song of praise; for birds and trees united in a mingled anthem, intelligible and grateful to the Most High. Bramley Park abounded in woody dells, green lawn, quiet leafy copse, and many-hued flowers, beside an ornamental lake, which furnished unlimited enjoyment to the youngsters in the shape of boating. The plain but ample luncheon was soon discussed, and then the afternoon was given up to unlimited fun. Teachers and scholars, seniors and juniors, the tidily clad and the ragged, all mingled together in one concert of happy jubilant sport, while here, there, and everywhere, was to be seen the form of Mr. Lisburne, almost a boy again, in his cheerful abandon and sympathy with the children.

Harry Connor was not a robust lad, by any means, and the rest given by this day in the country was like a breath of heaven to him. His duties at Mr. Stephenson's warehouse were constant and toilsome; so that many a day he felt almost unable to walk the many journeys which his office entailed upon him. Had you sought him among the lads playing at hocky, football, or leap-frog, you would have missed his pale, thoughtful face, but apart, withdrawn from the throng, under the shade of some noble beech-trees, he lay, drinking in the sweet sights and sounds of this new world, as the thirsty desert drinks in water. Always a thoughtful lad, he was indulging himself in a bit of quiet meditation, when another lad about his own age came up and accosted him with—"What are you about, Connor? Building castles in the air?"

"No! I'm thinking."

"Thinking! Of what? I fancy you are such a queer fellow—always "thinking" about something or other. Why, sometimes your face is as good as a sermon, even in school. Does your master pay you for thinking?"

"Yes, certainly. If I didn't set my thoughts to work upon his business, I shouldn't be of much use to him; but it wasn't of business or of work that I was thinking then."

"Well, perhaps you won't object to enlighten a fellow upon the subject. I have played football till my legs are bruises all over, and I'd like a little rest now."

"Well, I was wondering what children—boys and girls like us, do in heaven? Do you suppose they have any games or employments of any kind, up there; or do they

pass all the time in singing and praise?"

"You have started a question now, Harry; I never thought of it before; but come to think of it, it doesn't seem natural to spend countless ages in singing, does it? I should

like to know, I wonder if anybody could tell us?"

"Teacher could, I expect," said Harry, "but I don't like to worry him now. But he said one or two things last Sunday which set me thinking about this subject. He said that in heaven we should be able to enjoy all that we lacked and longed for most in this world, provided only that it were pure and good. Do you see what that means, William?"

"Not exactly. Explain it to a fellow, will you, Harry?" "Well, I take it to mean this. You know we poor boys who have to work hard and fare hard, never knowing what luxury is, have to be denied of so many enjoyments which rich folks can have. We have as much as we can do to get food, and clothes, and a shelter-sometimes very little of those, you know, William-so that we have neither money nor opportunity for getting at higher things. I am fond of drawing and pictures, for instance, and would give almost anything to be a great painter. But I never can. It's only once now and then that I can see a picture, as it is hung in the shop-window, leave alone studying the art. I can do a little in drawing, and gained a prize at school the other day; but what is that to the glorious art of painting so like nature, that those who look at what you have done, can scarcely take their eyes off? Then I love reading; I think if I had a fortune I should read every book I could procure. all this is denied me, here. I must toil all the week through for a bare living, and for mother's too; and so you see, I look forward to having all this which is denied me on earth, in heaven."

"Supposing you get there," added the other boy.

"Of course; but I do hope to get there, and so do you, I should think. A boy can make as sure of heaven as a man, if he'll only walk the way there."

"Well, that isn't a bad notion of yours, Harry. If ever I should get there, I should like music best. Jesus wouldn't

say nay to that, would He?"

"No, you may depend upon it. Teacher says that our notions about heaven have been too narrow and straight-laced. It will be 'fulness of joy,' because we shall have

the fulness of all enjoyments."

"Well, I tell you what, Harry. Go out preaching when you are a man, and tell people these new notions about heaven. You'll get plenty of listeners, I'll be bound. But I must be off, now. Our boys are going to have a game of cricket. Don't think too much, Harry," and off he bounded.

The boy was right. Heaven is a place full of all enjoyments. To how many a longing, eager mind, dwarfed and stunted, because of the lack of opportunity here, does this assurance come like a new gospel? Thousands of God's children here are like prisoners and exiles, instead of like children, because of their continual burdens of toil, privation, and With scarce enough to keep body and soul together —with all that is beautiful and elevating denied them by reason of bitter, grinding poverty—with talents buried and undeveloped, through lack of culture—they live all their lives here like barren, fruitless trees, as far as the mental part of their nature is concerned. They have not risen to the level of their birthright here; the animal part of the nature must be kept alive at the expense of the mental, and spiritual; and so the soul is repressed and checked, and its energies and powers crushed. It is well that there is another life in which the heart's yearnings can be "satisfied;" well that there is another world in which the poor and the destitute, like Harry Connor and his fellow-scholars, shall have a grander life than it is possible for them to have here. Sir Isaac Newton looked forward to perfecting his astronomical knowledge in heaven. How much more, then, shall they who have been denied everything in this life revel in the glorious delights then opened up to them? It is well that heaven, with all its enjoyments and employments, is mostly

a sealed book to us while in the flesh, or our eager souls would long to fly there, to enter upon the wealth of that inheritance. The grandeur and the "fulness" of that new life is many-sided, and every capacity for the pure, and beautiful, and good with which we are endowed, will there be satisfied.

# CHAPTER XXVII.

### AN UNCONSCIOUS PREACHER.

"Manhood's years a tale have told
Of sorrow, sin, and pain;
Call the wanderer to the fold;
Oh, touch those chords again.
One kindly look, one loving word
Might stir the depths within,
And cadence sweet, before unheard,
Break through the strife and din.
That breast, where memory seems to sleep,
Bound in a weary chain,
Might swell with feelings strong and deep;
Then touch those chords again."

"Are they in sight, John?"

"Not yet, but it can't be long first. I've been watching

the Creek Road for the past hour."

"I hope nothing has happened. It seems an age since I saw Alfred, and something warns me now not to build too

much upon meeting him again."

"Nonsense, dear! Your anxieties make you nervous, that's all. Perhaps there has been some delay with the cattle. They expected to leave Melbourne last Monday, so that if all goes right, we may look for them to-night."

"How our boy will be grown!" observed Mrs. Godfrey.
"It is nearly seventeen months since we saw him last. He

will be much changed in many things, I expect."

"Yes. For one thing, having gone out to face the world

for himself, he will be more self-reliant and manly in his bearing. And I expect mind and body have kept pace with each other in point of stature, for at his age, he would be daily leaving the boy and the boy's ideas behind."

"I suppose we should have heard by this time had any

accident happened!"

"Yes; Charlie Browning is most trustworthy. I know him thoroughly. Had there been anything wrong he would have been here with the tidings long before this. But make

yourself easy, Alice; nothing wrong has happened!"

The speakers were Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey. They were looking out for the arrival of their son, who had landed in Melbourne about a week previously, and was now coming up by the wagons. There were no other means of locomotion into the bush, so Alfred was compelled to beg a month's leave of absence, or his original fortnight would have been absorbed in journeying to and fro, seeing that the two hundred miles which lay between Melbourne and Wheeler's Run could not be traversed in much less than a week. Some of the drovers and shepherds had been down to Melbourne for supplies, taking with them loads of wool, and Alfred was about to return in their company.

"Here he comes!" shouted Harry Godfrey, who, with his father, had kept a look-out from a neighbouring hill. "They are about two miles off, I should think, father. Florence is up there, and she will stay until she can make out Alfred. He isn't near enough yet, though, to be distin-

guished from the rest."

Florence was standing, as her brother had said, upon the top of the hill. The most cursory glance could not fail to detect the improvement in her since the arrival of the family in Australia. The thin delicate face was now transformed into a ruddy, well-favoured one; and a strength and elasticity of spirit, entirely foreign to her in the old times, had now become hers. Indeed, the Australian life was agreeing with them all, both physically and temporally. Mr. Godfrey was laying by a store of savings, as well as of experience, against the time when he should become a farmer on his own account; and Mrs. Godfrey was well content that the change had taken place. She had but one

wish unfulfilled, and that was that Alfred might be with them. If only he were settled at Wheeler's Run, instead of following a wandering sailor-life, she would have been happy.

"Here they are, mother," said Florence. "Let us go down the road to meet them. I can make out Alfred very

well, in his sailor's clothes."

"So we will," replied Mrs. Godfrey. "Here, Mabel, come with us," she called out to her youngest daughter, "come with us to meet your brother." And taking the little girl by the hand, away the trio went, while the father, with Harry and Frank, waited and watched behind.

They had not far to go. At a sudden bend in the road, they came face to face with the first wagon, and before Mrs. Godfrey could clearly discern its occupants, a tall, bronzed

sailor-lad jumped out and kissed her.

"Here I am, mother, safe and sound once more. Do you know me?" he said, in his old, cheery, hearty voice.

"Know you? Yes, my boy; I should think I did!" she replied, while she looked proudly at him as he kissed one sister, and then another, meanwhile telling the men to drive on, as he would walk the rest of the way up to the house.

"I suppose you got my letter, mother, didn't you? I posted it in Melbourne, while I was waiting for the wagons that your letter told me of."

"Your letter, Alfred? No, certainly not! We have

neither seen nor heard anything of a letter."

"Why, one might almost as well be at sea, as far as letters go, as in the bush," put in Florence. "Old Sandy Scott, who keeps the post-office, lives ten or twelve miles away, and we don't send to him very often."

"Then I'll go over to-morrow morning, and fetch and deliver it myself, like Pat Murphy did once. Perhaps old Sandy reads them over first, for his own special information,"

suggested Alfred.

"We can't say. But as it is the rule to fetch our letters, we cannot blame old Sandy for its non-delivery," replied his mother.

By this time Mr. Godfrey had come up, and the party,

after mutual congratulations, went into the hut. Alf. looked round rather curiously and his merry eyes twinkled mischievously, as he mentally contrasted this home with the one they had left behind in Manchester. But there was no time for criticism; each one had so much to ask and to tell, that the shades of night drew on before Alfred's luggage had been thought of. It lay in one corner of the hut, where the men had placed it, and on the top was stationed the goldfinch's cage, on the perch of which its

occupant roosted peacefully for the night.

It was not very long before Florence was told in secret conference all the messages which Mr. Lisburne had sent, of which the long letter which Alfred produced from his sea-chest the next morning, was the confirmatory evidence. The goldfinch quickly became even a greater favourite with the inmates of the station than it had been with the Duncan's officers; while to Florence it was specially dear, as being Mark's gift. How she devoured that letter! It was full of affectionate regard for her, and assured her that as soon as he succeeded sufficiently in his profession to make and keep a home, he should come for her, and claim her as his very own. With this object in view he said that the longest waiting would be sweet, and the most painful drudgery pleasant. Mark besought her still to remain true to him, now that one half the globe divided them, and told her that all his success would be achieved for her. It was not a hard thing for Florence to do this; her affections were Mark's already, and it needed but the assurance of his constancy to keep her firm, even though many thousand miles of water rolled between them.

Beside the goldfinch and the schoolbooks for Florence there were presents for the rest of them, which Alfred had obtained during his stay in South America. Curiosities of every description, both natural and artificial, were brought out and displayed, until the rude log table resembled a stall at a bazaar, and the younger boys danced round it

with delight.

That visit was a period of unlimited enjoyment to Alfred. The free untrammelled life which the settlers led made him feel at home among them, and he became familiar with



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almost every part of the run, taking long excursions here, there, and everywhere, with the herdsmen, until his friends began to scold him for not spending more of his leave in

their company.

The goldfinch was a beautiful singer. Every day it was hung up for a few hours outside the hut, and never failed to attract an appreciative audience. On the Sunday following Alfred's arrival, as Mr. Godfrey hung it out of doors for the first time, three or four of the men and lads ventured nearer to listen to its song. Being the Sabbath day, although very little of the true Sabbatic rest was known there, they did not labour so hard, and during most of the middle of the day, in fact, lounged about doing nothing, so that this new arrival offered a powerful attraction to them.

The men were in various attitudes, but all were smoking. Mike Wellman and Dick Fowler were lying on the ground from sheer laziness, while Tom Higgins and Ned Green were sitting on the top of the railings inclosing the patch of garden-ground, swinging their legs, and criticising the little songster. In their usual dirty attire, unshaven, and uncivilized in their look, rough in manners and mien, and outrageously profane in their language, the group would have afforded a study for a painter. They looked like what they were—exiles from home and friends, because of their crimes and vileness of character. Two of them had served periods of penal servitude, and their friends had shipped them off to Australia immediately on their liberation from the convict establishment; while Higgins and Green, although too young to have much practical acquaintance with convict establishments, were such incorrigible ne'er-dowells, that their parents had sent them out to take their chance among strangers. They all carried Satan's mark on their faces; the ineffaceable stamp of wickedness which such sinners carry, singled them out for the pity or the dislike of all who saw them. Mr. Godfrey kept them, as much as possible, from any intercourse with his children; they were, in fact, the pariahs of the station; and had it not been for the occasional association with the families of the married shepherds, who were most respectable in their characters and behaviour, the Godfreys would have

felt the burden of loneliness worse than they did.

The little warbler poured out its wealth of song, all unconscious of the character of the listeners, and they, quite as unconsciously, let the pipes drop down from their mouths, one after another, as they drank in the music.

"Tom," said Ned Green, presently, "when last did you

hear such a song as that?"

"Not since I left England," replied Tom. "My sister had one at home, and somehow it reminds me of her. Hang it!"

Silence again. Then Dick Fowler spoke. "I say, mates, this brings back the time when I was a boy. Why, when we lived in that little cottage by the squire's park, that I've told ye of, we kept a goldfinch, in a green cage, just like this."

"Ah! you hadn't graduated at prison then, old chap," put in Mike Wellman. "You were more innocent then, old boy, than you are now."

"True, true!" and a grim smile passed over Dick's features

as he thought of the past, with its long dark record.

Silence prevailed again on the part of the listeners, while the bird trilled forth its beautiful melody. As they listened, a new thought seemed to strike Tom Higgins, and raising himself on his elbows he looked around.

"I say, mates, a queer thought has just struck me. D'ye think if that bird knew what a precious lot we were, it would sing to us so sweetly?"

would sing to us so sweetly?"

"Yes. Why not, you young cur?" roughly demanded Dick Fowler.

"Why not? Why, just because if we got our deserts we shouldn't get anything pleasant or agreeable, should we'? And as it is, we've got it hard enough. I know I've got to find life vastly different since I was banished out here. It's a dog's life, and worse than a dog's life—that's what I say."

"Then why don't you write home and ask them to take

you back again?"

"Because I don't like to. And another thing, they wouldn't have me, if I did."

"Wouldn't they! Not if you reformed, and went back a new man?"

"Afraid not."

"Well, try. Reformation ain't a bad thing," said Dick.

"Then why don't you try your hand at it," said Tom.
"It would do you as much good as me, I'm thinking. You'd be a little better off to-day if you'd only reformed a year ago." Tom Higgins was a saucy youth; he said pretty well what he chose to the clders at the station, albeit it

cost him bruises and black eyes, sometimes.

"Boy, don't say too much," rejoined Dick's deep bass voice. "What I say I say for your good, and I don't want it flung back in my teeth again. You may reform; there's a chance for you, at your age, to become happy and respected; but my time is too far gone. Besides, you've never been to jail; you haven't that disgrace upon you; and people will forgive a little wildness in young fellows if only they turn over a new leaf. Why, I've a little chap in England—he must be now ten years old, and it's more than six years since I saw either my child or my wife, but I must be a brute if I didn't think of them sometimes—and I'd sooner cut off my right arm than see that little fellow come to what you are, to leave myself out of the question altogether."

Tom wasn't saucy enough to reply to Dick this time. Evidently something was touching a tender chord in his Old, familiar scenes, and old faces rose up before him, as the goldfinch sung on, until he pocketed his empty pipe, and quietly slunk off to the hills to hide his emotions. Mike Wellman and Ned Green strolled off too, to see to the folding of the sheep and to relieve the other shepherds. Both of them were sobered down; their brutal bravado was gone, and in place of it a certain remorseful recollection of old times rose up, until they almost compromised their manhood by shedding a few involuntary tears for the past. Dick Fowler went off to the hut specially reserved for the use of the single shepherds, and there, for the first time for years, wrote a few lines of contrition and affection to his long-forsaken wife and child. He might have been in England then, happy and prosperous, blessed with wife, child, and home, had he only kept to the path of rectitude,

but now he was literally exiled, for his friends had washed their hands of him years ago. Poor Dick! there wasn't the warm welcome for him that there was for the prodigal in the gospel; and so he hesitated and hesitated as he scribbled, until he had more mind to burn his letter than he had to send it to England. Nobody knew or dreamed of the conflict there was in that man's breast that afternoon between good and evil.

That innocent little warbler! How little Mr. Lisburne dreamt, as he chose it for a present to his Florence, what a powerful preacher it would prove. What small occasions will stir the heart's most secret memories, and revive the long-banished yesterdays of our lives! Little did the young Manchester surgeon imagine that his bird would do this among a party of desperate sinners, out in those Australian wilds.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## A SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERVICE.

"We pant, we thirst for fountains
That gush not here below;
On, on we toil, allured by dreams
Of the living waters' flow.

We pine for kindred natures
To mingle with our own,
For communings more full and high
Than aught by mortals known."—Mrs. Hemans.

ALFRED was wandering about, rather disconsolately, on the second Sunday of his stay at Wheeler's Run, and rebelling inwardly at the monotony and dulness of the life there. He might almost as well have been on ship-board—and indeed, better, because his captain would doubtless have read the service of the Church of England, and a sermon, from which

he could have derived some little good; while here, he could not hear a word of the sort. Not only were there no Sabbath chimes at Wheeler's Run, to tell of the advent of the bright day of peace and rest, but there was no service of any kind held at the station, and a heathenish darkness hovered over all the mental and spiritual atmosphere. Mr. Godfrey was not a decidedly pious man, although very moral, and outwardly reverential; Mrs. Godfrey also was destitute of that religious decision which would have led her to rear an altar unto the Lord. Only Florence thought upon the matter at all in this light, and possibly her duty with respect to it might not have presented itself so clearly to her view, had it not been for Miss Brookland's admonition. But up till this time, she had not done anything for the moral and spiritual well-being of the people at the station. Shamefacedness, inertness, fear, doubt, had all a share in restraining her from doing anything in this direction hitherto. But she had talked the matter over with Alfred, during the week of his stay there, and had gone over the books Miss Brookland had sent her, with smitings of conscience, on account of her lack of energy and courage. And now, on this bright, sunny, Sunday morning, as her eye caught Alfred wandering about moody and restless, she felt doubly conscience-stricken. Could she not manage to make his Sabbath remembrances more pleasant than at present they promised to be? Suppose he were to be lost at sea on his next voyage, how should she regret not having done all that lay in her power to make his last Sabbath with them a hallowed season! He and she had talked over the matter during the previous week, as I said, and she had been "almost persuaded" to commence missionary work; but this last thought settled the matter. Putting on her hat, she went out to Alfred, and came up with him just as he was making up his mind to take his Bible, and go off to the hills, there to spend the day in studious solitude.

"Alfred."

"Yes, Florence."

"Begin the Bible-readings?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;I've made up my mind. We'll begin to-day and I expect you to help me."

You will help me, will you not, Alfred?"

"Most assuredly. But, in the first place, we must get the audience together. Have you thought of that?"

"No, I have not. We ought to have given notice yesterday about it. After all," added Florence, in a disconcerted

tone, "I suppose we must let the matter drop."

"No; we need not, sister. Four or five of the men will be in presently, and we can tell them about it, inviting them to attend this afternoon. Then I will start at once to Allen's hut, and engage them all to come. What with ourselves, the men, and the Allens, we shall make a tidy company to begin with, I should say.

"There is another thing, Alfred," said Florence, timidly. "After we have got the people together, somebody must take the lead—I mean as to reading and prayer, and such

like. Will you?"

"I don't mind helping, but I ain't cut out for a minister at all, Florence; so you mustn't look for much help from me in that line. I should break down, if I tried."

"But you must try. I cannot do it all by myself; the

men would laugh at me."

"No, they won't, Florence. Just tell them that you will give a Sunday-school lesson, and perhaps they will think of the time when they went to Sunday-school too. At any rate, I'll read the chapters and give out the hymns, but you must offer prayer, and explain what's to be explained. I daresay Mostyn and his family would like to be present; but you see it's too far for me to go and come back at such short notice."

Mostyn was the shepherd who lived, with his family of seven or eight boys and girls, six miles off in the bush. It was obviously impossible to go to them with the news at such short notice, or some of the younger branches of the family would certainly have attended. It was a pity, for if ever a family needed evangelizing, "Mostyn's lot" did, although I must in justice say that they were not worse than any other family would have been, born and bred in Australian wilds, utterly destitute of any mental or moral training.
"Very well, then, Alfred; I'll speak to father and mother

about it while you are gone, and I'll do the best I can at the reading, though I am afraid I shall break down, and if I do, you must take my place. I shall feel more at home after a little practice, I daresay."

So it was settled, and without more ado, Alfred started off to Mr. Allen's hut, where, contrary to expectation, he found a couple of the young Mostyns, and engaged them to

return with him for the afternoon.

It wanted just one hour to the time of meeting when Alfred returned to the station, tired with his journey, it is true, but all eagerness to commence the experiment. But first the bodily wants of himself and the Mostyn boys were to be attended to, and Mrs. Godfrey provided them with a plentiful dinner, listening the while to her son's account of his morning ramble. Florence had acquainted them with the scheme, and had obtained their sanction to it, so that the herdsman and shepherds who had their turn home to-day were waiting outside for the meeting to commence. Godfrey intended that the Bible-reading should take place in his hut, thinking, perhaps, that greater reverence would be shown, both to the service and the day, if it took place under his own eye. Higgins, Fowler, Green, and the others, were not over reverential at any time, and it would be scarcely wise to allow two amateurs like Alfred and Florence to enter on such an undertaking, with such characters, without the presence and protection of their elders.

Presently the Allens—father, mother, and children—trooped in, and after a few words of greeting, took their seats on the long low forms which had been brought from the hut of the single men, and ranged in order for the little audience in Mr. Godfrey's hut. Then Mrs. Godfrey and the younger branches of her family, together with the young Mostyns, took their seats, while Alfred and Florence took up positions near a table facing the company, on which was strewn a collection of Testaments and hymn-books. As the men outside seemed chary of putting in an appearance, Mr. Godfrey went out and invited them in. He even went further than this, and in Scripture language "compelled" them to come in; and a very hang-dog, sleepish-looking group they were, as they sat down, one after another, on

the form nearest the door. They were evidently ill at ease, entirely out of their element, and as they sat with their caps in their hands, it was not difficult to imagine that upon the first opportunity they would make "a bolt" of it. But the goldfinch was warbling sweetly outside, and that might tempt them to remain, if nothing else did; while, with Mr. Godfrey's eye upon them they would, at least, behave

decently.

By-and-by they were all seated, and then Mr. Godfrey judged it best, as the senior one of the three who occupied the positions of leaders, to speak a few words of introduction. Looking round upon the little congregation, he cleared his voice and said:—"Friends and neighbours—it may be wise to give a word of explanation as to the service of this afternoon. We are not sent into the world to live only for this life, but it seems to me that we are apt to forget this in the bush. Our Sundays are much like other days—if there be any difference at all, there is more lounging and idleness on that day, but we certainly do not get any mental or spiritual profit. Some members of my family were connected with a Sunday-school while in England, and they miss the Sunday-school services very much. It has therefore occurred to them that Sunday afternoon readings of the Bible might be acceptable to all of us. You cannot say that you have no time to attend, or that you have anything better to do. We are all at leisure now, and it strikes me that we shall be none the worse for thinking and reading a little bit about the next life. My son and daughter will chiefly conduct the service, and I need not ask you, friends, to give your best attention. Will you please to pass round these Testaments and hymn-books." As Mr. Godfrey said this he commenced distributing the books which lay on the table, and presently everybody in the hut had a copy of each.

As Mr. Godfrey sat down, Alfred rose, and commenced giving out the familiar hymn—

"Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne;"

while Florence cleared her voice in order to raise a tune. As she stood up to do so her heart went pit-a-pat, and she almost wished she had not commenced such an arduous task, but having put her hand to the plough it was not for her to look back, ere she had hardly begun. So, with a faltering voice, she raised an old short-metre tune, which had been sung in the Manchester Sabbath-school scores of times in the children's hearing. The Godfreys and the Allens sustained it heartily—Alfred's voice ringing out clearly above all the rest. He gave out each verse as they went on, and the Mostyns and the shepherds stared with undisguised delight, until by-and-by, as they drew near the end of the hymn, one after another, they too joined in its strains. They sung it through to the close, and then sitting down, looked at each other inquiringly, wondering what was coming next.

Alfred solved the puzzle by reading a chapter from the New Testament—a pretty long one, because, as he felt, he could safely occupy the time in reading the Scriptures. Then they were all asked to kneel down, or bend forward, for that Florence would offer prayer. What an ordeal that was! As she looked round, her tongue seemed parched in her mouth, and her head swam round with the excitement: but as she noted the stalwart fellows reverently bending on their knees before the Divine Majesty, she grew equal to the occasion, and rising, offered up a heart-felt simple prayer. Mr. Allen said "Amen," two or three times, in the course of her petitions, in a gruff, hearty way, which told of former connection with the Primitive Methodists; but all the rest listened in respectful silence. Even the Mostyn boys forgot to pull one another's ears, or to play stupid pranks, as was their wont; while the outcasts of the company doubtless remembered former times, when they too, as children, mingled with the multitude, who kept holy day in the sanctuary. After prayer, another hymn was sung, and then the Bible-reading proper commenced.

The chapter was the thirteenth of Matthew—chosen by Florence for its striking and familiar illustrations, its simple parables, and its important lessons. Verse by verse it was read through by the whole company, except the Mostyn lads, who hung their heads, rather stupidly, at their in-

ability to join in this exercise. It was a confession of ignorance which was not pleasant, even to those bush-arabs. The men at the back of the company mostly read very well, and seemed not unwilling to display their proficiency, it being a novel thing for them to engage in any civilized occupation such as this. Mr. and Mrs. Allen took their share of the reading with evident relish, it being like cooling waters to the poor woman's thirsty soul. The chapter finished, the books were closed, and now it devolved upon Florence to give the practical instruction. With a short and silent petition for help, she stood up, and commenced her task falteringly and mistrustfully, as if the sound of her own voice scared her.

# CHAPTER XXIX.

## FLORENCE'S BIBLE READING.

"Sowing the seed by the wayside high,
Sowing the seed on the rocks to die.
Sowing the seed where the thorns will spoil,
Sowing the seed in the fertile soil.
Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain.
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,
Sowing the seed of eternal shame.
Sowing the seed with an aching heart,
Sowing the seed with the teardrops start.
Sowing in hope till the reapers come,
Gladly to gather the harvest home."

"My dear friends," said Florence; "I hoped and intended that this service should be more of a conversation on the chapter read than anything else; but as it seems that you are expecting to hear something from me, I will try to say a few words in explanation of the subject. I used to teach a class in the Sunday-school, frequently, when we lived in

Manchester, and I should be glad if you will consider yourselves as my class this afternoon, so that I may talk to you in the old familiar style which our teachers adopt in England. In Manchester and its neighbourhood, people of all ages go to the Sabbath-school—parents and children, married and unmarried, so that none of you are too old to follow that example, and endeavour to learn something pertaining to your eternal peace, this day. Then bear with me, my friends, for a few minutes.

"The subject of our lesson this afternoon is the parable of the sower, 'Behold a sower went forth to sow.' illustration is taken from the customs of Eastern life. sower went forth carrying a seed-basket full of corn, scattering the seed with his hand. This sower may be taken to represent any one who tries to teach religious knowledge, or who endeavours to lead others to Jesus. missionaries, Sabbath-school teachers, all labourers in God's great vineyard are sowers. They go forth, perhaps with uncertain, trembling footsteps, sowing at every opportunity the good seed of the Word of God. But this sowing does not all prosper. As you read, some of it falls by the wayside, some among stony ground, some among thorns, and only part of it into good ground. You, who are accustomed to out-of-door work, know very well what will be the result, if seed be sown in such unfavourable soils. It cannot The fowls of the air carry away the bring forth a harvest. seed by the wayside, the seed sown in stony places is scorched up for lack of nourishment, and where it falls among thorns, it is choked so that it cannot grow at all. Only that which is sown in good ground repays the farmer's care and toil; only from such fields can he ever hope to reap a harvest.

"Now, Jesus meant to say by this parable that there are four different classes of hearers. You know that a parable is a word-picture, or in other words, 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.' It is a plain and easy mode of conveying instruction, and was frequently made use of by our Lord. So by this means, He showed the distinctions which existed among his congregation, as to the manner in which they received His word. He afterwards explained to his

disciples, how, and by what means, his hearers became 'wayside,' or 'stony ground,' or 'thorny ground,' or 'good

ground' hearers.

"The wayside hearers were those who listened without much interest—probably they yawned with indifference, and had no desire to understand it. In such a case it became very easy for the wicked one to snatch it away, or to banish the recollection of it from their minds. were none the better for listening to it all, and would have been better without the privilege, seeing that their rejection of it added to their condemnation.

"But there were some who listened to Jesus' words with joy and gladness. They felt that a new teacher had come among them, sent from God, and that He spoke the most wonderful words, concerning the life to come and the things They were glad to listen to the message, and hung upon the lips of the teacher with joy. They received the word, in a certain sense, and for a time obeyed and practised But the way to heaven was not all smoothness; 'He that would wear the crown, must first learn to bear the cross.' Very likely their companions would sneer at them, and laugh their efforts to do right to scorn. But the excitement of hearing this new Gospel began to wear away, and then those 'stony ground' hearers, not having the root of the matter in them, began to cool in their attachment to their Lord, to grow 'offended' or discouraged, and left off trying to follow Jesus, and then ended by finally leaving Him altogether.

"But a third class received the word in a better spirit. They really loved the Lord Jesus, really believed on Him, and tried to do His will. They heard His message with joy, and clung to Him for a long time very closely. But they were busy with the things of this world, in their different spheres, because some were poor, and some were rich. 'cares' of this world choked the word in the one case, and the deceitfulness of riches, in the other. I suppose some of the seed lay buried in their hearts still; we do not read that it was dead or forgotten, but simply 'choked,' and so they failed to continue following Jesus, or to bring forth fruit to

his glory.

"Only one more class of hearers remained, and of these we believe that Jesus found a great many. This class of hearers listened to His message and received it with joy. They laid it up in their hearts, and practised it in their lives, regardless of trials, persecutions, or scorn. They went on their way, hindered neither by cares nor riches, and brought forth fruit to God's honour, according to their varying capacities. These were 'good ground' hearers; these were they who would be found faithful unto death, and would receive the crown of glory, which God has

promised to all who follow him fully.

Florence hesitated as she proceeded to give the application of her subject, but she plucked up heart again. but a little company, but I think we have some of these different kinds of hearers among us. Indeed, we must belong to one or another of these classes. It is true that you have not had many opportunities, since coming to the bush, of listening to the Gospel; some of you may not have heard it for years; but back in the long past, when you were able to listen to it, how was it then? Did you sit heedlessly and carelessly under the sound of the Gospel, never thinking that the message was for you? Did you spurn the news of God's great love, whereby He had planned a way of escape for you from the punishment due to sin? Did it fall upon your ears as the pleasant song of a very lovely instrument; but once past, was it soon forgotten? If so, you were none the better for it; the opportunity of embracing the truth passed away unimproved, and here you are to-day rather the worse than better, for once having heard it."

Dick Fowler hung his head and remembered the past. In his youth he had lived where he could and did regularly hear the message of the Gospel; but had been most emphatically a "wayside hearer." No sooner was the seed sown, than his wicked companions, or his unlawful pursuits, had banished all trace of it. Only too quickly did the wicked one catch it away! And what had been the result? As he looked down at himself, dirty, reckless, miserable, poor, destitute, in fact, of everything but his daily rations and the poorest of shelters, he could not but admit to his own

conscience, that it might have been far different with him had he not been a "wayside hearer," and a despiser of God's words.

"Am I speaking to any who have been 'stony ground' hearers? Did you, when favoured with religious privileges, receive the word for a time with joy, resolving that you would, from that time, serve the Lord? And you perhaps followed Jesus for a time very lovingly, and very earnestly, finding in this service your greatest delight. But, all too soon, trials arose to test your newly-found faith. Religion did not agree with your calling; or you were subject to persecution; or you lived among the society which would not tolerate Christianity, and in the struggle which followed, you were not prepared to give up everything for Christ, So you became 'offended' at religion—'offended' at the life of consistency and self-denial which you were to lead; 'offended' at the idea of suffering loss for Christ, and you gave him up. Have you been a gainer by it, dear friend? I wonder if, in reality, you are not the loser—if you would but speak out?"

Mr. Allen looked thoughtful and self-convicted. If he would have spoken out, he could have told how much less happy and blessed his life had been since he drew back from following Christ. Years ago, when in the old country, he had followed his Master for a time, touched with what seemed like real love to him; but his associates and fellowworkmen had laughed him out of his religion, and now, for a long, long time, he had grown harder and more indifferent. Indeed, since coming to Australia he had lived as if there were no God—he had spent each day like the beasts which perish; and if his wife ever suggested anything savouring of spiritual interest, he only answered her very curtly, as if the subject were too distasteful to be entertained. Certainly Mr. Allen had not gained anything by being one of the "stony ground" hearers.

Florence went on. "Perhaps I am speaking to one who is a 'thorny ground' hearer. There was a time when you really and truly accepted Christ as your all, and His name and doctrine were very sweet to your souls. For a long time you evinced your love by your works—you were con-

sistent, humble followers of the Lord. But a change has come over you. Circumstances have placed you in a position unfavourable to the development and growth of religion. You have been far from the means of grace; the cares of this life, and the difficulties and worries inseparable from 'getting on' in the world, have hidden as it were the good seed. It is not entirely lost, but there it is, lying unfruitful and 'choked.' You think of your children, of your friends, of your calling, of your home, of your health, and of everything but 'the one thing needful,' and while there is perhaps a chord deep down in the heart which responds to some touch of Divine things, it is only once now and then; as a rule, you are immersed so much in the cares and anxieties of this life, that you have little thought to spare about the Is this right, my dear friend?"

What a "word in season" for Mrs. Allen! She was truly one of the "thorny ground" hearers. Time was when religion was her chief joy, when she followed the Lord fully, as far as a woman could do. But since coming out to Australia, since being exiled from the means of grace, to which from her earliest years she had been accustomed, in the old country, her spiritual light had grown dim, and her spiritual life had lost its vigour. Immersed in the thousand-and-one cares which ever surrounded the mother of a young family, buried as it were in the bush, isolated from all fellow-Christians by the position she now filled, she had, little by little, allowed the good seed to be "choked" by the thorns of this life's "cares." But should it be so always? As she sat there, feeling self-condemned by the words of this "babe in Christ"—a mere child compared with herself-she silently resolved that she would take courage and begin again. She had slumbered hitherto, but now, by God's grace, she would "awake out of sleep." Mrs. Allen took the lesson to heart most seriously and thoughtfully.

But one more class of hearers remained, and Florence

continued.

"We come now to the 'good ground' hearers. are those whose hearts are prepared by the Spirit to receive the word, who are not only 'hearers' of the word, but

'doers' also. They receive the Gospel message with joy, lay it up in their hearts, and practise it in their lives. persecution or scorn ever shames them out of their profession; no cares or employments ever entice them away from Christ, but onward they go, like burning and shining lights in a dark world, showing to all around what 'a dear Jesus they have found.' Their religion is fit for all times and places; it upholds and comforts them under all circumstances. The Bible is the 'man of their counsel,' and 'the lamp of their feet;' the Spirit is their comforter and guide; Jesus is indeed their Friend and elder Brother; God is their dear Father, angels are their ministering servants, and heaven is their home. What a portion, dear friends! What a prospect! Is it not well with those who are 'good ground' hearers?

"Would you not like to have this prospect, this portion, for yourselves? Your life in the bush is hard, monotonous, toilsome, and harassing. You have little outward enjoyment of any kind. One day is so like another that you are in danger of sinking into a semi-brutish state, taking no thought for the life that comes hereafter. But now I ask you, with all sincerity and kindness, Would not religion make this daily life of yours better, nobler, more satisfying, and more happy? Would you labour for this world less earnestly because you had a mansion in the skies, and an inheritance of glory awaiting you? Would you live less comfortably day by day because, instead of the 'wrath of God,' you had His love abiding with you? Would life indeed be less sweet, less enjoyable, because you had this new life—this eternal life given by Jesus, this happy consciousness that Christ and all He can bestow, were yours? Oh no! it would not, but much more happy and enjoyable. This fair world itself would seem clothed with new glories because your Father made it, and daily you would be able to sing of Him who had saved you and bought you by His own blood."

Florence's instruction was ended, but not so the influence of it. She sat down covered with blushes and confusion of face, while Alfred gave out the concluding hymn. She could not herself remember what she had said, but those

who heard her were not likely to forget. She had touched some new chords in their breasts, and without doubt they would vibrate ere long to new and unaccustomed melodies. At anyrate, among that nondescript and feeble audience in the bush, the seed had been cast out upon the restless waters of human life, although with a feeble hand. Would it spring up "after many days?"

# CHAPTER XXX.

#### BETTER TIMES.

44 I walk with friends in the sunset's glow, I listen to music of long ago. But one thought, like an omen, breathes faint through the lay: It is but a dream; it will not stay.

"And away, like a flower's passing breath, 'tis gone,
And I wake more deeply, more sadly alone.
Oh! a haunted heart is a weight to bear;
Bright faces, kind faces, where are ye—where?"—Mrs. Hemans.

FLORENCE still kept up a correspondence with her old friends, and sometimes her journeys to Sandy Scott's quarters were rewarded by news from home. One day, when rambling out with the younger branches of the family, they all went off to the post-office, thinking by this means to pass away the tedium consequent on Alfred's departure, for he had been gone now something like three weeks, and as Scott's establishment lay some ten miles off, or more, it was no bad ramble for the young folks of a Manchester bred family. Time was when five miles would have fatigued them out of all endurance, but they thought comparatively little of this ten miles, now, so much stronger and healthier had they grown; and Mr. Godfrey would send the light wagon to meet them for the return journey.

The only document lying at old Sandy's, was a letter in a girl's handwriting, addressed to Florence. As the old

man handed it to her, he characteristically peered at it through his spectacles, remarking, "A letter from the old country, miss."

"Yes, I see it is."

"From some relation, maybe?"

"No, I think not. Thank you; good morning;" and Florence moved away before she could be subjected to any further cross-questioning on Sandy's part. He was a strange compound of curiosity and independence, and would have relished knowing the contents of another person's letter better than a gift of five shillings. However, the would-be colloquy was speedily cut short, and Florence sat down on a fallen tree, as soon as she was out of sight of the postoffice, to peruse and reperuse her letter. It was from Maggie Selwyn, who still retained a grateful remembrance of Florence's kindness towards her before their departure from Manchester. It was a long, rambling, and sometimes rather "gushing" epistle, as girls letters generally are wont to be, but it conveyed a good deal of home-news which Florence would not have learnt in any other way. It was tinged by a hopeful feeling too, for the war-cloud was dispersing, and importations of cotton were daily announced. The letter also contained news concerning the Sunday-school, together with items of girl-gossip and personal intelligence, which Mr. Lisburne would never have thought of writing. But I had better reproduce it for my readers' own perusal.

"You cannot think how I missed you after you went. Things seemed to grow worse and worse, and I should have gone out to some place of service, had it not been for mother. Not that I am much of a servant, you know, for I was never able to do much house-work, having been at work in the mill almost ever since I remember. But I should have tried to have got some place, where the mistress would have berne with my ignorance and have been willing to teach me. Of course the wages would have been low, and perhaps the work hard, but anything would have been better than the forced idleness, and the lack of comforts, which we were obliged to endure. But there was mother to consider; of course she depended upon me mostly for help in keeping the home together, and it would have been

equal to breaking up the home had I gone out to service. There would have been no other choice but for mother and Annie to have gone into the workhouse, and of course I couldn't think of that, so I staid on, and hoped for better times.

"We continued going to Miss Brookland's one evening a week, all through the worst of the time, and now some of the girls, who have no steady work as yet, continue to go as usual. But as it was only intended for us when out of employment, and almost wanting daily food, we who have something to do, don't go. It would seem like taking

advantage of our teacher's kindness, wouldn't it?

"Some of the mills are working half-time again. Some others, among which is the one where I am working, give four days a week, and we hope soon to get our full time allowed. They say that cotton is to come from India and Egypt for the future; but if so, I hope it will be better than some of the samples we have had of it. It was full of dirt and bits of stalk, so that there was great danger of destroying some of the machinery. They say, however, that the later lots of cotton have been better picked and I suppose those stupid Egyptians and Hindoos were new to the trade of cotton-picking. Anyhow, we all hope and long for the conclusion of the war. It seems dreadful for people to be fighting and killing one another for the sake of keeping up slavery. A gentleman has been here lecturing to us several nights lately, and he has explained all the matter to us. He told us that in the two great armies, Northern and Southern, were to be found fathers fighting against sons, brothers against brothers, and friends against friends. It seems that in some families there were divided opinions as to keeping the negroes in slavery, and so the members joined different armies. And then, again, some members of families had removed to the Southern States, the lecturer said, and so they espoused the side of the States in which they were living. He told us one affecting story of a young man belonging to the Northern army, who was posted on sentry at the edge of a wood one night just before a battle. It was his place not only to keep watch, but to shoot the sentries of the opposite side, and then act as spy, so as to give information about the fight that was expected on the morrow. Well, he watched and watched, and by-and-by a young soldier came out from behind a tree, opposite where he was placed as sentry, and looked up at the stars, when suddenly the other shot him down. With one groan he fell, and died. In the daylight, the sentinel who had shot the other saw his dead body lying under the tree—for the Southerners were moving off, and had not time to look for their dead comrade —when who should it be but his own younger brother! His agony of mind was dreadful, but it was too late, then. Isn't it horrible to think about, Miss Florence? And all this for the sake of keeping the poor slaves bound down to the chain and the lash, as they have been. Why, we would rather suffer as we have done, for want of work; and starve upon one meal a day, as we have been doing, than that this should continue. This is the spirit of all in our mill, and I hear that the other hands feel the same. But we all hope that the war will soon be over, and that the slaves will be set free.

"I must tell you how they received the first bales of cotton at Barker and Son's mill. You know that Barker's have been shut up for a long time, but last week they obtained a lot of cotton and re-opened. The news flew about like wildfire, and the hands resolved to meet the wagon as it came up with the first load. The horses drew it into the mill-yard, and the women and girls all gathered about it crying as if they had found a dear lost friend. I'll be bound they won't waste their money again, as they have done, nor be so saucy and independent when they have got good places of work once more. I was on the outside of the crowd, for I assure you it was quite a sight to see the girls all crowding round the bales, and even kissing them for joy. It seemed as if they wanted to welcome the cotton like any living creature. Presently, Madge Hartley—you remember at Madge Hartley, who teaches the little class at our Sunday-school—struck up the doxology. I thought it was a funny way of doing things, but it seemed to suit the people, and before the first line was through, all the crowd was singing with one heart and voice"'Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'

"I joined in, too; I couldn't help it, and when I saw the people crying for joy, I cried as much as any of them. Their poor thin faces were lighted up with hope, and it is confidently expected, by those who know best, that before long the war will be over. Once that is the case, people say that the Americans will be only too rejoiced to return to their cotton growing so as to supply their old customers again. We shall thank God every day with full hearts whenever that time comes; and when the fire is never out, nor the cupboard ever empty, once more, we shall think it almost too good to be true. I have never squandered much money, you know—circumstanced as we are I have not had it to squander; but I think I shall look at a sixpence twice before I spend it, after the experiences of this terrible time.

"And now, dear Miss Florence, I should like to know something of yourself-that is if you would not mind writing to me. We still think of you at Miss Brookland's, and pray for you. Teacher thinks that you will do some good out in Australia. Are you trying? I should like to know. What sort of Sundays do you get out there? I think of you sometimes when I am sitting in chapel, and see the pew that your family used to occupy, empty. Our Sunday-school and chapel are both thinned by poverty. As their clothes were out, the mill hands had no money to buy any more, so they were ashamed to go in rags. It may be wrong for them to stay home altogether, because of their thin and ragged clothes, but I don't like to blame the poor I have done it myself, many a time; but we shall all value the Sunday services the more when we are able to go regularly again.

"I suppose you are able to get out into the woods, and go for long rambles sometimes. Your Australian air must be different from our Manchester air, and I expect you all look the better for it. At any rate you have time for thinking, and that is what we could never get in the mill—

the whizzing and whirring which surrounded us was too

confusing.

"Mother desires to be remembered very respectfully to you. She does not forget your kindness when you were home, and she hopes that you will be prospered abundantly now that you are away. Please also to present my respects to Mrs. Godfrey."

There was not much more information calculated to interest my readers, although it was highly interesting to The harmless items of news which Maggie Selwyn's letters contained, seemed to bring Florence en rapport with the scenes and surroundings of the old Sunday-school times; and as she sat there, all the old familiar associations passed before her mind like a panorama. She saw herself once again seated in Miss Brookland's class, listening to the well-known voice; or surrounded by the little ones whom she sometimes taught, trying to implant in their innocent guileless minds some knowledge of holy things. Harry and Frank were busy, hunting for wild berries, or she would have had her reflections intruded upon ere this; but they managed to come within earshot every now and then, and at the same time to keep a look-out for the wagon, which was to meet them about this time. As Florence's eye rested upon them, she resolved to do what she could towards continuing a regular course of Sabbath services, for the benefit of all those at the station who chose to attend. She might, for aught she knew, be the means of leading some one of them to the Cross of Christ; and if she could do nothing more, she could certainly be the minister of good to her own family. These young brothers of hers were growing up very ignorant of religious things, as compared with herself. There were no religious exercises, or services of prayer and praise, to serve as landmarks in their moral and spiritual history, consequently, their training had been How could she hope that they fragmentary and disjointed. would grow up like Alfred? Were not the associations and the influences by which they were surrounded, all against this kind of thing? Then, seeing her duty, it behoved her to do it. It was hers to stem the tide of ungodliness, indifference, and ignorance, which flowed around, and to rear

an altar to the Lord. It was an undertaking for a girl-a great one indeed. You who read of it, and feel ready to applaud Florence because of her determination and earnestness, with reference to this matter, must not imagine that she had exceptional courage and faith, so that the trial was rendered so light as to be scarcely a trial at all. No such Florence Godfrey was just a timid, shrinking girl, like yourselves—fearful of thrusting herself forward, and quailing before the ordeal of publicity, as you would quail before it. That Sunday afternoon service which she led, at Alfred's earnest request, had partly broken the ice, yet nobody but herself and God knew what it cost her. such a trial as her mental and physical nature shrank from, although Alfred had wrung the promise from her, before his departure, that she would continue to have these "Bible readings." Miss Brookland had also urged her to the duty, her parents had spoken encouragingly of it, and now this last letter from home had somewhat deepened and driven home the conviction of duty, which had all along hung over her soul like a nightmare. Plainly, while there was such a text as this in the Bible, "To him that knoweth how to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," she could not despise nor refuse that duty.

"Here comes the wagon, sister," announced Harry noisily; and while he spoke, the jolting, creaking, vehicle lumbered up. They all got in, and in another five minutes were on

their road home.

# CHAPTER XXXI.

#### BURNTIE GLEN.

"Wherever in the world I am, In whatsoe'er estate. I have a fellowship with hearts To keep and cultivate, A work of lowly love to do For Him on whom I wait. In service which Thy love appoints There are no bonds for me, My secret heart is taught the truth That makes Thy children free; A life of self-renouncing love Is one of liberty."

-A. L. Waring.

A YEAR had passed away and Mr. Godfrey had prospered. He had exchanged the condition of a servant for that of a master and sheep-owner, and was now proprietor of a pretty extensive run, capable of employing at least half a dozen His savings had been profitably invested under young Mr. Bowes' advice and direction, and now that the snow-ball had begun to accumulate, there was no saying how large it would become, provided always that pastures were green and fair, and his servants trusty. Burntie Glen, their new home, was a pretty place, but I will let Florence describe it herself.

Mr. Lisburne was lounging in his own private sittingroom at the infirmary, deeply absorbed in a letter. I need not tell you how eagerly everything bearing the Melbourne post-mark was looked for, nor how greedily it was devoured. Anybody who has ever been in love can imagine all that for themselves, and those who have not may wait for the experience to come. The breach between Mr. Lisburne and his uncle had never been healed, for once when the old gentleman discovered that his nephew's "foolish infatuation," as he termed it, still existed, his half-formed thoughts of reconciliation fled away. But what cared Mark, so that Florence was true to him? Worldly matters were prospering with him, and he was bidding fair to attain such a position that he could with propriety request Florence to be his wife. How he wished that he could have been at this very Burntie Glen that was pictured out to him by her facile pen, as a perfect bower of beauty and haven of rest. It would have been a welcome relief to the worry and anxiety of his

daily life.

"You could not help liking Burntie Glen if you saw it. We had that name because one of our shepherds is a Scotchman, and suggested it; so, as we had not fixed on a name ourselves, we adopted his recommendation, and I do not think we could have had a prettier. It is charmingly picturesque, and gives one at once the ideas of peace and beauty. We have first a little streamlet running by, close at the end of our garden; then, beyond that, a wood where wild berries grow in rich profusion, and wild honey is to be obtained every autumn. It is true there are some venomous snakes in the wood, but we rarely ever see them, and as our men kill all that they can come across, their number is slowly diminishing. In front of our hut, which is of course built of logs, honeysuckles, rose-bushes, and Australian climb ing plants are growing, and they have stretched their long tendrils pretty well up to the roof. A pretty bit of flowergarden, left in good order by the last owner, is my own special care, and I almost feel as if I am among English scenes and English flower-gardens again when I am working We have a nice lot of palings surrounding the hut and garden, so that we feel quite like the people of old, 'sitting under our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to molest us or to make us afraid.' Our house—or hut, for I must keep close to Australian names—is a long, rambling, roomy affair, built entirely of wood. We have no upper story to it—such a thing as stairs not being required where you can build a house as long and as broad as you like upon the ground-floor. We have seven or eight rooms all communicating with a wide passage, and each room would contain inside it two or three of our old Manchester Then the walls of the hut, although of logs, are not what you would expect from the name, being lined

inside with panelled boards, painted as gaily and as cheerfully as any woodwork could be in England. The windows are sash-windows, and the doors have handles and locks, so that we have not left civilization behind, but have rather found it, by coming to Burntie Glen. The former owner was a self-made man, and as he prospered in life, he liked to have his belongings look nice about him—for which I think he was to be commended. He succeeded in making a fortune, and is now gone home to England to spend it. I hope father will be prosperous enough to do the same; for you know, however prosperous people may be out here. or however much they may succeed in life, they always speak of England as 'home,' or 'the dear old country;' and I think we feel our thoughts go back to it very lovingly and yearningly, as the thoughts of the Israelites of old went back to Jerusalem, when in captivity in Babylon. There is always an exiled sort of feeling in one's breast, and as we busy ourselves at our work, or sit in the gloaming, pondering, and talking of old times, we go back, almost unconsciously, to English life and English scenes, as if our true home were still there. But you must not imagine from this that we are sorry we came out to Australia. Oh, no. have prospered in every way by coming, and I think it was a good Providence that inclined father to take the step. But I have not yet described all the place to you. Beyond the wood, of which I spoke, there are hills, which stretch all round our run, in a vast and magnificent semicircle, reminding me sometimes of the texts: 'I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help;' and, 'As the hills are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people.' As we stand at our door, and look around, the eye rests upon acre after acre of beautiful pasture-land, diversified and beautified by the streamlet and the woods, of which I spoke before, and bounded in the distance by these grand old hills. Upon their tops the sun seems ever to shine, and the thin blue cloudy veil which rests upon them only reminds me of our English hills. As I stand there of an evening, looking round upon the landscape, sometimes my thoughts fly off to the Antipodes—that is, of course, the Antipodes of Australia—and I wonder where

you are, and what you are doing, then. Especially is this the case of a Sunday evening, for if ever I miss the civilization and the religious privileges of the old country, it is then. So do father and mother, although they do not say much about it. I almost think that the temporal advantages one gains by emigration, are more than counterbalanced

by the absence of the means of grace.

"Well, this leads me to another subject, of which I must tell you while I think of it. I have described the natural aspect of the country as being beautiful; but what shall I say of the moral condition of its inhabitants? When we came out here, my dearly beloved Sunday-school teacher, Miss Brookland, sought to impress upon my mind the necessity and the duty of my becoming a missionary in my new sphere of life. I have often puzzled over the words, and wondered if there were really any necessity for my teaching the Bible to the rough people one comes in contact with out here. I must confess that my first impulse is to recoil from such, with a feeling of strong repulsion, and it is only when the duty of teaching the ignorant presents itself forcibly to me, that I can conquer my prejudices sufficiently to do so. You cannot think how much this constant contact with wickedness, and lawlessness, and Sabbath desecration, together with the absence of all ennobling and sacred things, tends to uncivilize, debase, and degrade men. Our men are not worse than the majority of other shepherds and herdsmen; some one or two of them, I must admit, have been inmates of a convict establishment, but, generally speaking, they are civil, trustworthy, and willing to listen. Father has engaged most of the old hands who were with him at Wheeler's Run. Mr. Allen took his place there as hut-keeper, but three of the rest—that is to say, Dick Fowler, Ned Green, and Tom Higgins-together with Mostyn and his family, engaged to work for father. Mostyn looks forward to the day when he shall become a sheep-owner himself; but the rest seem to have no other object in life than earning money, and then going off to Melbourne to spend it 'on the spree,' as they term it. Higgins and Green went down to Melbourne the other day with about fifty pounds each, being their half-year's wages, and managed to spend it all, in card-playing and drinking, within a week. They then came to their senses and stole back here, more like tramps or bushrangers, than like anything else, and promised most pitifully to turn over a new leaf. But it is most likely that by the end of the next half-year they will have forgotten all about this expe-

rience, and will do the very same thing over again.

"Besides these men and lads, we have two families of squatters within three miles of us. One family, named Sharp, I rather like. They seem somewhat more intelligent, and have a fair library of books which they brought out from England. Nellie and Lottie Sharp, the two elder sisters, are very nice girls, and there are four or five little ones beside. The other family, named Willis, is less civilized, and less intelligent. They can read the alphabet, I suppose, but no more, and if you try to enter into conversation with them they really seem at a loss to comprehend you. But Nellie and Lottie Sharp, and myself, make up a very comfortable trio, and manage to get on nicely together

in most things.

"Now, leaving the Sharps out of the question, you see that all the others are low, uneducated, wicked, ignorant, and some of them criminal. This being the case, you cannot wonder that I feel repelled from work among and with them. I think if Miss Brookland were here, in the midst of my surroundings, she would feel the same. distasteful though I felt it, Alfred succeeded in persuading me to commence a series of Sabbath Bible-readings before we left Wheeler's Run. Since coming here we have continued them, although Alfred has returned to his ship long ago, and the greater part of the work falls upon my shoulders. Father, however, gives out the hymns, and the Sharps help wonderfully in the singing. I cannot complain in regard to the attention shown, or the behaviour of the attendants at our little services; although sometimes I wish myself anywhere than where I am. Just fancy me on a Sunday afternoon, seated in front of a little log-table, waiting for the service to begin. On my right hand, father sits, to give countenance and authority to my doings. In front of me are our own family, the Sharps, the Mostyns, the Willises,

and such of the men as happen to be off duty for the afternoon, making altogether a class or audience of from twenty to twenty-five. Pretty well, for this little church in the wilderness, is it not? and, considering the great possibilities which lie enshrined in this small and unpretentious beginning, I dare not draw back from the work. Nellie Sharp raises the tunes; of course we sing some of our oldest English tunes, but they are all the sweeter to our unfastidious ears, for they bring back memories of the old time when we heard them in our own well-known sanctuaries. Well, this service lasts about an hour and a half, and then, when it is over, Nellie Sharp, Lottie Sharp, and myself take the younger children belonging to the four families, and teach them reading and catechism. This is our miniature Sundayschool, and, with all its defects, I assure you both teachers and children enjoy the hour spent in it. But we need some little picture-books, story-books, and magazines, wherewith to stimulate and reward the little ones; and if I may ask a favour of you, I would do it for their sakes. If you could send me out a parcel of Sunday-school publications, we should all bless your memory, and hold you in grateful remembrance for a long while to come. I have more hope of the little ones taught here than I have of the others. True, the men and women seem to enter into the Bible reading with zest, but there have been long years of worldliness and wickedness in their case, and the Word fails to influence them very much. But these little ones, who knows! They may rise up to bless the church and the world long after I am in my grave. At anyrate, when I am with them, I feel that I am doing my own special work, that it is among the children I can best act the missionary's part."

This Sunday-school, although Florence so modestly alludes to it in her letter, owed its origin entirely to her. Nobody thought of taking the little ones by the hand, or trying to lead their childish, unformed minds to the Saviour, until Florence mooted the subject to her friends, the Sharps. They promised to help her, as far as they could, and relying on their promise, she started the school the following Sunday. Truly, this was one of the best ways of making

that moral wilderness bloom with fragrant flowers, and even to "blossom as the rose."

I may not give the rest of Florence's letter, that being intended for Mr. Lisburne's perusal alone; but you may rest assured that the next mail carried out a bountiful supply of pictures, magazines, school requisites, and rewards. The work was too much in unison with Mark's own principles, to receive neglect at his hands, if by any means he could aid it.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

# A STEP UP THE LADDER.

"The mighty pyramids of stone
That, wedge-like, cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.
We have not wings, we cannot soar,
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.
The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night,"—Longfellow,

"Mother, look here!"
"What is it, my boy?"

"An advertisement for a junior clerk. I think I shall try for it."

"A junior clerk? But are you sure that you could fulfil the duties of that situation?"

"Yes, far better than I can those which fall to my share now. Mother, I am not strong enough for porter's work, and I have made up my mind to get out of it, for your sake, at the first chance. Mr. Stephenson is very kind to me, and pays me well; but I cannot do more than my

strength admits of doing, and I think I should be better if I could sit at the desk all day."

"But, Harry, do you know that you must be a scholar to take the post of clerk, even though it be as junior. You have not had the chance of getting an education such as

would fit you for it."

"No, mother, but I have managed to educate myself in great measure. You never knew how much I studied at night, nor how much I study now. I can write fairly, and cast accounts correctly; and that is all that this advertisement requires. Look!"

Mrs. Connor took the paper and read. The advertisement ran somewhat after this fashion—"Wanted, a young lad, able to write and keep accounts, as Junior Clerk. Salary according to abilities. Good character for honesty

and industry indispensable."

Mrs. Connor pondered a moment as she looked at her son's pale face, wondering within herself whether this nightly study of which he spoke was the cause of his delicacy and paleness of look. But like a wise woman she said nothing in reference to it, only mentally resolving to put a stop to it, if possible, for the sake of Harry's health. What she did say was this: "Well, my boy, if you think that you are capable of filling this situation go and try for it. And may God bless you in your effort, for you have been a good son to me always."

And so he had. Since his father's death it had really seemed as if the boy strove to fulfil all the added duties which devolved upon him of keeping the home together, with a proud tenderness of spirit, which was very beautiful to witness. Mrs. Connor was not yet freed from the drudgery of the wash-tub and house-scrubbing, but her lot was very much lightened by Harry's labours. His wages had been twice increased—Mr. Stephenson seeing in his errand-boy a lad of strong integrity, honest truthfulness, and adherence to duty. Knowing that these qualities could not be bought for money, he yet remunerated them, as far as he could, when he did find them. Owing to this, Harry was receiving fair wages, and was gradually surrounding his mother with comforts to which she had for a long time been a stranger.

Instead of the low, three-legged stools which had been in the father's time, sometimes minus a leg through his violence, they owned three sound wooden chairs, as bright and as shining as "elbow grease" could make them. In place of the rickety table, which Mrs. Connor had with difficulty managed to prop up against the wall securely, there now stood a decent kitchen-table; and Harry rejoiced nightly in a little iron bedstead and soft mattress, purchased by his own overtime earnings, in lieu of the heap of straw which had formerly been his portion. Gradually, one thing after another of household plenishing was coming into their possession, and what was more, they knew how to appreciate it and keep it. Had John Connor been alive the chances would have been all against the retention of these new household treasures, for had Harry found the money to purchase the articles, they would have been quickly transferred to the pawnbroker's or the furniture broker's, until both mother and son would have sat down in despair at the ruthless spoliation and scattering of their household goods. now, the two who were all in all to each other, worked together and planned together, until they restored something like order and harmony in the home that had been so long cursed by the foul spirit of intemperance.

Mr. Stainforth, the gentleman to whom Harry was just at this time making his application, was a genial, broadchested, hearty, good-tempered man. Harry went trembling into the office, and having been accosted by a foppish young spark who had more pride than brains, stated his errand.

"Want to see Mr. Stainforth, do you?" remarked this sprig of gentility. "I don't fancy you will suit him; he wants a young gentleman." At which polite remark he looked significantly at Harry Connor's clothes, and gave a knowing wink to his fellow-clerks. They took the hint and laughed uproariously, while Harry felt his cheeks redden, and his pulses beat fast with mortification. The poor lad had simply grown too big for his clothes. He had taken such care of them that he had not worn them out while they fitted him, and now, though their brightness and beauty were gone, they would have lasted decently some time yet, had they only been a little larger. But Harry was just at

that age when elbows and wrists outgrow the jacket sleeves, and ankles are visible between the boots and trousers; and a lad feeling himself uncomfortable and unsymmetrical in point of attire, is most awkward and embarrassed in his bearing. Mrs. Connor had enlarged and lengthened the clothes as much as possible, but her attempts at tailoring had not much improved the matter.

"I say, who's your tailor, Mr. Somebody?" asked the clerk who had before spoken. "Has he forgotten to send

home your last suit?"

"No," replied Harry, scarcely knowing what to say.

"Don't you see," put in another mockingly; "he's in the

scarecrow regiment."

"I'm in no such thing," returned Harry stoutly; and stung into replying sharply, he stood up and added, "If I cannot see Mr. Stainforth, I will leave. I did not come here to be ridiculed."

"My dear fellow, don't be angry," replied the clerk who had first spoken. "We are only desirous of seeing you dressed as becomes a gentleman. We only say this for your good. Believe me, you will look back at yourself another day, and wonder how ever you could endure to go

about in such scarecrow apparel."

The young man spoke so gravely, that Harry could not decide whether he was in jest or earnest, but it roused him up to say what perhaps, under any other circumstances, he would not have said. Looking up earnestly at the group of young men who were listening to the conversation and scanning his apparel curiously, he said, "I am the only son of a widow. My father was a drunkard and did not get me good clothes, as you have. Since his death I have had to earn my bread, and partly my mother's, by hard work, leaving little enough to spare for clothes. I think, had you been situated as I have been, you would not be better dressed than I am."

"Bravo, little fellow!" said a gruff voice in the background, at which all the clerks fell back in dismay, for the owner of it was no other than Mr. Stainforth himself. "Bravo, my man! You have read these young sparks a lesson of real life, which I hope they will not forget. Go on with your

work, young gentlemen," he added, looking round at the group, as they scrambled back to their desks and recommenced writing. Then, turning to Harry he said, "Did you want to speak to me?"

"Yes, sir, if you please," replied Harry, fumbling in his pocket for the advertisement, which he had brought with

ĥim.

"Oh! Then you may come in here," said Mr. Stainforth,

holding the door of his private office open.

Harry entered and sat down on the seat Mr. Stainforth indicated to him, puzzling the meanwhile as to how he should commence his errand.

"Please, sir—please, sir——"

"Well."

"Please, sir, this advertisement says that you want a lad as junior clerk—to write and keep accounts. I can do that."
"Can you?" said Mr. Stainforth, with an amused look.

"What have you been doing? and where did you learn this?"

- "Why, sir, I've been office-boy, and lately light porter at Mr. Stephenson's, so that I got some insight into business there; but I have tried to improve myself at night, and I think I can do what you want. Will you be so good as to let me try, sir?"
- "I should like to see what you can do, first, and of course I must get a character from your last place before I could put you in my office. Can you get that?"

"Oh! yes, sir. I know Mr. Stephenson will give me a character, though I have said nothing to him about it yet."

"What wages does he give you?"

"Seven shillings and sixpence a week, sir. I commenced at five shillings, and have been raised twice since then."

"And what did you do there?"

"Keep the office and counting-house clean, make out

small bills of parcels, and delivered goods."

"Very well. Now let me see what you can do. Here, take this pen. Now sit down and write a letter at my dictation."

Harry took the pen, and nervously arranging the paper, sat up to the desk to do Mr. Stainforth's bidding. It was a simple business epistle, worded in the usual prompt pre-

cise fashion of those missives. As Mr. Stainforth glanced over it he was gratified to see that the spelling, punctuation, commencement, and superscription, were not only all correct, but bespoke some amount of culture and care on the boy's behalf, as well as a slight acquaintance with business forms.

"Very good. Now let me see your performances at casting accounts. Make out a list of these goods into a bill and cast it up, just as you would to send to a customer."

Harry did it—not correctly the first time, but with a neatness, precision, and business-like manner, which pre-

possessed Mr. Stainforth at once in his favour.

"That will do. I think I will give you a trial. You may begin on Monday morning, provided your character be good; and your salary will be ten shillings a week, for the first six months."

What a mine of wealth seemed looming in the distance for Harry! He jumped to his feet and tried to thank Mr. Stainforth, but the words refused to come at his bidding. Only two great tears, which overflowed, and ran down his flushed cheeks, told the tale of his thankful gratitude.

"You needn't say much, my lad. I know just how you feel; but I will wait for you to show your gratitude by faithful service. If you become a good servant to me I will be a good master to you, and shall raise your wages at stated intervals. By the way, however, what were the clerks saying about your clothes before I came in just now?"

"Well, sir—" Harry hesitated, for a nice sense of honour made him halt before he framed a complaint against those with whom he should, in the future, become associated; "they laughed a little at my clothes, that was all;

and they are small and shabby, as you see, sir."

"Was that all?"

"Not quite all, sir, but I think they only meant it in fun. Young gentlemen will be larkish sometimes, but I

don't think they really meant any harm."

"Very well; now listen to me, Connor. You said your name was Harry Connor, didn't you? Well, remember never to go into debt. If your clothes are shabby, let them be so, but don't go in debt for more. It is the ruin of a young fellow, when first he begins to disregard this whole-

some rule; and it strikes me that some of those fellows outside would be happier and freer this moment if they had never transgressed it. *Their* tailors know, to their cost, when their last suits of clothes were carried home, I expect."

To this advice Harry listened, as in duty bound, and resolved to act upon it. But in his mind's eye he saw himself equipped in his Sunday garments, in Mr. Stainforth's counting-house, while, with the proceeds of his labours there, another, and a larger suit, could be obtained for best.

"Thank you, sir, very much. I'll be here punctually on Monday morning, and do all I can to please you, sir." So saying, Harry bowed himself out of the office. As he passed through the clerks outside, now all busy with their pens, he could not help holding up his head with pardonable pride, to think how soon he should be among them, and, as far as daily occupation was concerned, one of them. He and his mother wove all sorts of bright visions that day; and none, I think, had a greater right to do so.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

### MR. MARSDEN'S ADVENTURE.

I SUPPOSE few, if any, of my readers, have ever been in the depths of an Australian forest. There, surrounded by trees and "scrub," with the firmament completely shut out from view, it seems impossible to travel in a straight line, or to traverse any distance, from one given point to another, correctly. There is a curious theory among scientific men, which would seem to account for the fact that those who get lost in dense forests always travel in a circle. It is, that one side of the body tends to outwalk the other; therefore, instead of the traveller pressing forward in a straight direction, he generally bends to the left or right, and after

describing a circle, as nearly as possible, comes round once more to the place from whence he started. Of course, I am now speaking of Europeans, who, with their limited knowledge of woodcraft, can never hope to compete successfully with North American Indians, and other aborigines of the woods. Many an Englishman, however, when wandering aimlessly and wearily in the depths of an unknown wood, ready to perish for lack of food, drink, and rest, would be glad to exchange some of his scientific knowledge for that of his less favoured savage brother. The Rev. Mr. Marsden, pioneer preacher and evangelist, was in just this situation, and would have willingly given up his trusty horse, could he by means of this ransom have found a way

out of his difficulty.

Four days before, Mr. Marsden had left the Pine Lake district to enter on a tour into the Red Creek district, wherein was situated Burntie Glen. He was accustomed to these journeys, and felt quite at home camping out all night under the shelter of a large tree, wrapped in his warm rug, and having his faithful horse tethered by his side. would fill the saddle-bags with food, and stuff his greatcoat pockets with tracts, hymn-book, and Bible, trusting to the frequently recurring springs and creeks for water. with a stout heart and a good pocket-compass, off he would go to look after "the lost sheep in the wilderness." And I cannot hope to make you understand how welcome and how life-cheering were his visits to the scattered families of the district. You who live in England, surrounded by religious privileges—to whom the gospel is free as air—who sit under the sound of the Word until you are sometimes weary of it, know nothing of the soul-hunger, of the destitution in spiritual things, and of the dense ignorance which overspreads the outlying stations of our colonies. Such pioneer preachers as Mr. Marsden are to be held in all honour, in that, while men around them are absorbed in providing for the life that now is, and, in some instances, sinking into the condition of the brute beasts around them, they travel up and down the length and breadth of the land, "faithful amid the faithless found," lifting high the standard of the Cross, and pointing men to Christ with a holy zeal, which

neither heat nor cold, hunger, hardship, nor thirst can

quench.

As I said, Mr. Marsden had left Pine Lake district four days previously for a preaching tour in that part of the country in which our friends, the Godfreys, were settled. three or four times previously he had made this journey, and had arrived safely at his destination; but by some mischance his pocket-compass had been lost since starting on his journey, and, as a natural consequence, he was without a guide in the depths of the forest, and as unable to find his way as a child. When it dawned upon him that he was lost in the forest, after searching and searching again for his compass, he felt something like a wrecked mariner on a lonely raft in the midst of the ocean might feel when waiting and floating, depending on the chance of a passing ship. This belt of forest, he knew, extended some hundreds of miles across the country, and at its narrowest part could not be less than twenty miles wide; but how could he hope to cross it at the accustomed place without the compass? On the guidance of that needle his life depended, but it was gone, and he trembled as he calculated the chances of being lost in the forest. He had brought food sufficient for three days, with him, and his warm rug; but if his wanderings were not brought to an end within a little time after the food was made use of, his chance of life would be small. True, he might fall in with some other traveller, but that was a remote contingency, and promised little hope. On the preceding night he had made a little fire in a cleared part of the forest, and bivouacked there, hoping to start with renewed strength in the morning on his painful quest. He had done so, and was now come back with weary limbs and desponding heart to the very place from which he had started in the morning. For a brief moment he forgot his manhood, and flinging himself down on the ground by the side of the bed of leaves on which he had rested the previous night, gave way to a burst of tears. Calling to mind all the tales of lost or strayed travellers of which he had heard, he pictured his bones lying bleached in the desert like theirs. while his friends waited and watched for a form which would never come. The faithful old horse which had kept him

company in his journeyings for the past five years looked on almost as sensibly as a human being, and putting down his head, felt about Mr. Marsden's face with his cold nose, as if to express sympathy for the misfortune which had overtaken them. This touch of nature roused Mr. Marsdento a holier, better sense, and choking back his sobs, he

lifted up his voice in words like these—

"Oh Father! Thou knowest all things—Thou knowest my present situation. Here am I, lost in the dense forest, with no power to extricate myself. Must I perish, lonely and unbefriended? Is it Thy pleasure that my work shall cease? If so, give me grace to die here, if need be; but if not, oh! send me deliverance. Open a way of escape for me; send me help and succour, and bring my feet out into 'a large place.' Oh, Father, for Thy Son's sake, turn not Thy face away from me at this time."

With renewed hope Mr. Marsden got up, and, holding his horse's head, peered round. It was dusk—in another half-hour the shades of night would fall on those gloomy recesses of the forest, and find him destitute of almost everything. But would help come? Yes: was not "man's extremity

God's opportunity?"

Ha! whose face was that peering through the limbs and branches of that tree? It was surely human! It was come in answer to his prayer. That it was a man's face, he felt certain, but he could scarcely control his voice sufficiently to speak, so great was the shock of finding another human being beside himself in these lonely shades.

"Halloo, there! who are you?" demanded Mr. Marsden going to the tree. "Are you a benighted wanderer like

myself?"

A revolver clicked, rather threateningly, and made Mr.

Marsden speak more hastily than ever.

"Stay, friend," said he. "I am not an enemy, only a traveller who has lost his way. If you can direct me I shall be very glad and will reward you. I am not asking for anything else."

"Swear to me that you will not betray me," said the man

still up in the tree.

"I cannot swear it, that being against my principles; but

I declare to you upon my honour as a man, and I give you my solemn promise as a Christian man, that I will not betray

you whoever you are."

Upon this the man came down, and stood before Mr. Marsden. He was a stout-built, determined-looking fellow, with black hair and thick long beard, as if neglect and hardship had been very familiar companions. He wore a tight-fitting coat made of skins, with leather leggings and moccasins. A tattered straw hat and powder-horn and revolver completed his equipment, and as Mr. Marsden looked at him, he felt forced to the conclusion that the man, whoever he was, formed no desirable companion for him. But, making the best of the circumstances, he began to explain.

"You see, friend, that I am lost in the forest. I set out four days ago to visit the Red Creek district, where I intended holding some services—for I am a minister by profession; but yesterday morning I got off the track, and have been unable to find it since. I camped out here last night, and this evening I have arrived at the same spot

again, after a whole day's wanderings."

"And what may yer name be?" demanded the man; because, stranger," added he, "I may as well say right out, that if you tells me any lies, a bullet goes through you

in double-quick time."

"My name is William Marsden, and I am an ordained preacher, belonging to the Methodist Church. It would be no advantage to me to tell you an untruth, would it?" said Mr. Marsden, calmly.

"That's as you may decide. But now, maybe, ye've

heard of Darkey Simpson, the bushranger?"

"I have, at different times," said Mr. Marsden. "But I

never felt any interest in him."

"Maybe not. Well, then, he stands afore ye," said the bushranger, and he stepped back to see the effect of his words.

"You, Darkey Simpson!" Mr. Marsden gave an involuntary start, for this man's hands had been red with the blood of colonists, and had been guilty of more crimes of violence than could be reckoned.

"Yes. Are ye afraid now?"

"No," replied Mr. Marsden. "I do not think you will hurt me, for I have never hurt you; and beside that, it is not ten minutes ago that I confided my way to God. He will take care of me."

"How was it, then, that He let you lose your way?"
"I don't know. Perhaps it was to meet with you."

This view of the case seemed to strike the bushranger somewhat forcibly, as it implied the overruling power of a higher Being than mortal man. But it seemed that he was afraid of treachery still, for he looked stealthily round, and said, "Now, you swear upon your honour that you will not be the means of giving me up to the Government. You know they've offered a price for me, dead or alive?"

"No. I did not; but it will make no difference to me. I promise you solemnly that I will not betray you, by word

or act."

"Well, then, stranger, as we shall have to pass the night here, I propose that we build a fire the first thing, and collect more leaves for our beds. You had better tie your horse firm to the tree, for there's a thunderstorm coming on

pretty soon."

So there was. Even now the clouds were gathering blackness, and the birds were hurrying, with sharp, shrill cries, to their nests. They had scarcely gathered a bed of leaves together, and ensconced themselves under the shelter of some leafy boughs, which the bushranger had twined together, as a sort of tent, before the first warning drops fell.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### A TALE OF A LIFE.

"A few short years!
Less time may well suffice to work for death and fate.
To work all change on earth; to break all ties,
Which early love had formed; and to bow down
The elastic spirit, and to blight each flower,
Strewn in life's crowded path."—Mrs. Hemans.

THE rain-drops fell thickly upon their improvised tent, and afar could be distinguished the mutterings of thunder. The two men, together with the horse, drew in as much as possible under shelter, Mr. Marsden fervently hoping that the thunderstorm might pass away without doing them damage. He had seen such tempests ere this, in the woods, and had trembled for his own safety, as he saw stately trees riven asunder, and laid prostrate under the scathing influence of the lightning. As they stood together under the frail shelter, and listened to the patter of rain, mingled and diversified, ever and anon, with the roar of "heaven's artillery," both the missionary and the bushranger realized, although in somewhat different degrees, how insignificant is the might of man, compared with that of his Creator. blustering outlaw was quiet enough now, seeing in every lightning flash a weapon of destruction, and trembling at the bare possibility of such destruction coming upon him; while the servant of God recognized his Father's hand, even in the tempest, and thankfully trusted in the shadow of that Father's wing. For an hour the storm continued thus, and by the time it was over, everything was so sodden and dripping, that it was impossible to kindle a fire. Simpson was the first to propose turning in, seeing it was out of the question to talk of obtaining any food.

"Guess, stranger, we'd better shake up these leaves for ourselves and the horse. That was a mighty big storm! I

thought once or twice that we were in for it. Guess that

big flash almost blinded you, didn't it?"

"It did. But we are mercifully spared once more. A friend of mine was struck dead once during a thunder-storm."

"Ay, I've seen men killed that way, before now. Once, when I was taking refuge with two of my mates up at Derry Creek, under a big tree, the other two were struck stone dead. Only I was spared."

"A very solemn occurrence, my man. Did it not teach

you a lesson?"

"What lesson, stranger?"

"To be 'also ready,' seeing that death may come at any

hour."

"Reckon I thought precious little about it," returned the bushranger. "I buried my mates quietly together in one grave, and shifted my quarters pretty quick. The mounted police were after me, and I knew I'd small chance if they caught me."

The bushranger was smoking now, an accomplishment which Mr. Marsden did not share. There was no food in either traveller's possession. A little grass had been collected for the horse, and this he was quietly munching; but both his master and his strange-spoken companion would

have to fast until they could get supplies.

"When did you dine last, stranger?" inquired the bush-ranger.

"Yesterday I ate my last meal. I drank at a spring this

morning, and filled my flask, but it is all gone now."

"Well, it's a nice prospect, but I should say that 'tisn't the first time you've got lost in the woods."

"No. I rambled two days' journey out of my path about

two years ago."

"Was that in this district?"

"No. I was a long distance north of this."

"Well, stranger, are you making a fortune by all this travelling and preaching?"

"No. I get enough to supply me with food, clothes, and lodgings. I never expect to get any more than that."

"Eh! Then I suppose you believe you are well paid?"

"If that was all, I should not. The best part of my payment consists in seeing sinners converted."

"And you don't see that very often, in these parts, I

guess."

"Yes, sometimes. Indeed, I've seen many like yourself

crying for mercy."

"Now, you're joking, stranger; I don't doubt but that you've seen some people acting that kind of thing over in your religious meetings, but lost ones like me,—never."

"Why not? Christ Jesus says plainly that he came to

seek and to save the lost."

A pause, during which Darkey Simpson seemed to be cogitating over this piece of intelligence; or perhaps the old merciful words recalled the time when he read them in his far-off English home.

"Well that might be, but He don't seem to seek me. The mounted police are a vast deal more likely to do that," he

added with a hoarse laugh.

"Stop a bit, friend. How do you know but that He is seeking you now? I am His servant, and I bring you His loving message. If you will but listen, you will find that He speaks to you, through me."

"Call me Darkey," said the bushranger. "It seems more

natural."

"Well, then, Darkey, it's no use your saying that Christ doesn't seek you, for He does. Maybe He so ordered it that I should lose my way, and so be brought in contact with

you, to-night."

"And yet I was pretty nigh shooting you at first. It seemed that I must do that for my own safety. Oh, you needn't look! I've taken men's lives before now—sometimes to save my own. I can tell you, bushrangers do queer things. If you knew all, you wouldn't tell me about Jesus Christ, but you'd creep away from me as you would from a poisonous serpent. "Tain't likely I'm going to tell you all, but if I did, you'd be afraid to trust yourself with me for five minutes longer. And how do I know now but that you will inform the police of my whereabouts, the first time you get a chance?"

"I have pledged my solemn promise to you that I will

not betray you, and I will not. If I can do you good, I will. Pardons have been obtained, you know, frequently, at the intercession of friends; and I'd do that for you, if I could, willingly."

"Ah! now; if I'd got another chance, I might redeem the past; but hunted as I am from place to place, like a wild beast, how can I help having my hand against every man?"

"Poor fellow! poor Darkey!" involuntarily fell from the missionary's lips. "You seem surrounded with difficulty and sin."

"So I am, but I wasn't so always. I was a curly-headed little fellow, the pride of my father, and the darling of my mother, once. I don't know whether they are living in the old country or not, now, but if they are, I daresay they often wonder where their dear boy is gone, and what is become of him."

"Where did you come from?"

"From one of the eastern counties—it doesn't matter much—and I've been in Australia more than twenty-five years, as convict, and bushranger. I went to the bad before I was twenty years of age, and got transported out here."

"Indeed! you must have begun early! How did it all

happen?"

"Well, stranger, I'll tell ye, because I don't feel as if ye'd betray me. Beside that, I shall make myself scarce after I have put ye into the right track for Burntie Glen, and we may never meet again on this earth; but ye seem to speak kind-like, and a kind word is more than I've got

for many a day. This is how it was.

"I was an only son, and got spoiled by father, mother, and sisters. I didn't do anything outrageous while I was a little chap, because you see, I didn't feel very wicked, then; but I'd run away from school, and spend the Sunday evenings in birds'-nesting, black-berrying, and such like, along with other boys who were older and wickeder than myself. I can tell ye, stranger, that little fellows learn a lot that is bad by doing like this. I was clever at robbing orchards by the time I was in my teens, and got pulled up before the local justices twice for it, to my father's shame and my mother's sorrow. I went to the Sunday-school while

I was too young to say I wouldn't; but once I got to the age when I could venture to say it, there was no getting me inside the school afterwards. My parents indulged me so much that they hadn't the heart to punish me, and so, little by little, I went to the bad. For petty thieving of one kind and another, I got sent to prison while yet a boy, and when I came out of prison, I grew worse and worse. Well, then there were some villains in the district who wanted to do a job of housebreaking, and as I was a strong, lithe young fellow of about eighteen, they fixed on me as the one for their purpose. I was nothing loth, seeing that the affair promised a good reward—for I may as well tell you, stranger, it was a jeweller's shop that we wanted to rob. Well, we went at it, but unfortunately the plunder was too much to be got safely away with, and just as I was making my escape, the police nabbed me. Of course I made a clean breast of the affair, and I and my comrades got sentenced to ten years' transportation.

"Norfolk Island was my doom, and I found there, if I never found it before, that what the Bible says about the way of transgressors being hard is true. We had to work frequently in chains; and confinement in the dark cell was often our lot, while our rations were not fit for dogs. prisoners were treated more like wild beasts than anything else, and so ferocious did they become under it, that no officer, although armed to the teeth, dared to approach within three yards of us. Life there was so horrible that a few of us formed the resolution to get off from the island even if it cost us our lives, and one dark night, after watching our opportunity to escape, we took a boat which lay moored at the water's edge, and got off. Two days afterward we were taken again by a vessel sent in pursuit of us, and then, after being carried back to the island, and heavily ironed, we were sent to Sydney, to be tried for this new Generally, in those days, the punishment was death; and we were so reckless and tired of life, that we even welcomed the prospect. But contrary to our expectations, the government treated us leniently, and we got sentenced to a further term of penal servitude in New South Wales.

"I served some years of my sentence, and earned a fair As the result, I was assigned to a master, whom I was to serve as herdsman until my original sentence was expired. Then my life was a little more tolerable, and I spent five years with him. But liberty is sweet, and after making many plans I resolved to make my escape. I did so, and falling in with a gang of bushrangers, accepted their offer and became one of them. Of course the police were sent after me, and rewards were offered for my apprehension; but I have succeeded in keeping clear of their hands till now, although I must own that my deeds as bushranger would have earned me a hempen necktie two or three times over. But now, as you see, I am alone; some of my party are dead, others have made their way to England, and I find that I have as much as I can do to support life with my scanty resources. I don't think I could get a pardon now. I'm too bad. At any rate, if the Government knew of all my deeds, I'm sure they wouldn't grant it. though I am a miserable wretch, the thought of being able to go about a free man is sweet. I'd give half the remainder of my life if I could go about like you for the other half, feeling sure that my life was my own, and that I was not liable to be arrested at any moment. I can tell ye, stranger, my life has been no pleasant one. If I had it to live over again I'd do it a vast sight different, I would."

"Ay, Darkey, you've served the devil faithfully, and he has repaid you with abundance of trouble and sorrow. Now, all who enter my Master's service, get honour, safety, peace, and eternal life. You can enter it if you will, even

now; he offers pardon to the vilest."

"Ay, ay. Well, I'll think of it, stranger. Perhaps I'll see you again some day, when you least expect me. But I dare not show myself now, I know my penalty only too well. I'll put ye on the right track for your district, in the morning, and then I'll bid ye good-bye."

"But you'll not forget my words?"

"No, I'll think of them, anyhow, because you are the first man that has spoken kindly to me, for years. What you have said to me to-night has carried my mind back to the time when I was a little boy."

After a troubled slumber, the two men awoke to greet the new light of another day, and without food or refreshment, seeing there was none to be had, started on their journey. Mr. Marsden resigned himself to the guidance of his companion, and about mid-day arrived at a point from which he could overlook the Red Creek district. Then bidding him farewell, the bushranger left Mr. Marsden to pursue his journey alone. This he did with so much diligence, that ere night he found himself at the door of Mr. Godfrey's hospitable home, where both himself and his weary horse received the food and rest they needed.

Mr. Marsden spent a fortnight at the station, and preached, read, and taught, more or less every day. His coming among them was like new life to Florence, for his labours cheered and seconded hers; not only so, but he got a hearing where hitherto she had seemed to fail. When he left, amid the thanks of all, both the Bible-readings and the Sunday-school were in a healthier and more thriving condition, because of the new vigour which his help and sympathy had infused into them.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### TWO YEARS LATER.

"Clear was the heaven, and blue, and May, with her cap crowned with roses, Stood in her holiday dress in the fields; and the wind and the brooklet Murmured gladness and peace, God's peace! with lips rosy-tinted, Whispered the race of the flowers; and merry on balancing branches Birds were singing their carol, a jubilant hymn to the Highest."—Longfellov.

"Now, then, lads, for our promised picnic!" said Alfred Godfrev's cheery voice.

Alfred was home again. His vessel, of which Charlie Capern was second mate, was lying at Sydney, and having a month's leave of absence he had sought once more the dear circle at Burntie Glen. And this time he did not go alone; for acting on the permission conveyed in Mrs. Godfrey's last letter, he was accompanied by Charlie Capern, who hailed joyfully the prospect of a week or two of Australian bush-life as a welcome change from the monotony of his sea-life. As my readers remember, he was Alfred's senior by six or eight years, and occupied an officer's post, while Alfred was still an apprentice; but having been acquainted in bygone years in Manchester, the young mate was nothing ashamed to avow his friendship for our Alfred was growing into a stalwart young fellow. The three years which had elapsed since he was with them at Wheeler's Run had given him quite a manly appearance; while contact with the world during his seafaring experiences, had made him assume the gravity and sedateness of one older than his years.

"By all means," answered Harry, running off to Florence, whose co-operation was indispensable in all schemes of this

kind. "Shall we get the Sharps, too?"

"Yes, certainly. Stay; I think we will leave the invitations to Florence. She will be sure to know whom to invite, and what to do. Are the Sharps very nice girls?"

"Yes. I should fancy Mr. Capern thinks so, for he has been over there already this morning," answered the lad with a roguish look. But he was right. The young mate had found in Nellie Sharp something which fascinated him, and led him to think that she stood distinguished among her sex for maidenly charms. Since making this discovery he had spent most of his time at the Sharps', although ostensibly Mr. Godfrey's visitor.

"Very well, then. Where is Florence? Let us find her

at once.

"Here she is, Alfred;" and as the boy spoke, his sister made her appearance from under the rose-covered porch.

"Florence," said Alfred, "we are thinking of this picnic, and wondering if you could spare time to go with us to-day."

"Yes, I think mamma could spare me very well. At least I know of nothing which promises to hinder me."

"Then the next question is whom to invite."

"Oh! we can soon settle that—Nellie, Lottie, and Fred. Sharp; Paul Mostyn, and his sister Sallie; Susy Willis; Charlie, and our five selves. Let me see, we shall make up twelve. Shall one of you drive the wagon, or do we require a man? If so, Tom Higgins will do best."

"I don't think we shall need Tom Higgins' services. Paul Mostyn ought to be a good driver, if I am not. We will have the light wagon if father can spare it, and while I am gone to arrange about it, will you see to the eatables?

Harry can run round with the invitations."

Harry did so, and within an hour or two the young party, full of health and jubilant spirits, met at the place appointed. Their destination was a romantic valley in the Neilgherry Hills, some eight miles distant, where they intended to ramble about, and pick the wild strawberries which grew in rich profusion there, until dark. The Godfreys were delighted at their brother's presence, and the whole party were full of rich anticipations. Florence quietly noted that Charlie Capern lifted Nellie Sharp on to the seat with a tender sort of deference, and then took his place beside her with evident gratification. The brave young fellow had travelled many thousand miles by sea and land to be at last captivated by the daughter of a simple Australian squatter; but Nellie was superior to her position in life, and would have worthily filled any man's heart.

The day was a glorious one. The emerald green of the rich undulating pastures, the far-away mountains enveloped in their misty mantle, the dark masses of woods running off into the distance, and the blue cloudless sky overarching all, united to make the face of nature very beautiful indeed. It was a day to be remembered by the sailors, when they should be tossing on the mighty deep, and battling with straining, creaking timbers, against wave and storm. Ever and anon, as they rode along, one of the familiar hymntunes which Florence had transplanted from England to Burntie Glen, was started, and as voice after voice took up

the melody, the old woods rang again.

The valley was reached soon after the sun had passed the meridian. Paul Mostyn and Harry Godfrey busied themselves in building a fire, and obtaining water for the kettle with which they had come provided; while Charlie Capern and Alfred improvised a tent, by stretching the awning of the wagon across some poles they had fixed in the ground. Meanwhile, the juniors of the party, relishing this Robinson Crusoe fashion, were busily occupied in unpacking the baskets, and it was only in consequence of Florence's most careful supervision, that the pies were kept from being crushed up, and the cups from being demolished, in the eager haste with which they were unpacked. But in spite of all mischances, it was at last accomplished, and the party sat around their al fresco entertainment, under the shadow of the awning, with the eager zest of appetites sharpened by pure and bracing air.

After the meal was dismissed, they separated, going in different directions, in parties of twos and threes, agreeing to re-assemble at the same place in three hours. Paul Mostyn's sister Sallie, together with little Mabel Godfrey, were deputed to remain with the horse and wagon, until relieved

by another couple of the party.

The three hours sped quickly by and they were all as yet absent from the trysting-place when Sallie Mostyn descried in the distance a man on horseback, riding swiftly, and coming straight towards them.

"Look," said she to the child, "that man is coming here!

Who can it be?"

"Oh! some traveller, I expect," said little Mabel. "I suppose he will say nothing to us. He may ask for direction, though."

"Yes; if he's not a bushranger, I don't care. We are here alone and none of our party are within sight. I have heard of the bushranger stealing horses, and he may take

ours; we could not prevent him."

"Oh! I don't think he will do that. Beside, I suppose we could call loud enough to make some of them hear. I'll

try."

With that Mabel lifted up her voice, and shouted as loudly as she could, but the only sounds in return were the echoes of her own voice, resounding again and again from the hills.

"I think it's somebody I know," cried Sallie suddenly.

She had been watching intently for the last few minutes, shading her eyes from the rays of the sun, which was now travelling towards the west. "It's Tom Higgins. I know

his way of riding."

Tom was a most fearless rider. He had gained his experience among the Australian herdsmen, and he possessed a peculiar way of swinging himself when on the saddle, which distinguished him from all the others at the station. Sallie and Mabel awaited his coming with breathless interest, for they felt that something had occurred at home, but what that something was they could not tell. As Tom came up he suddenly checked his horse, and flung himself on to the ground, asking as he did so for a drink of water. As Sallie handed it to him, she said:

"Tom, what is the matter? If anything is wrong, tell us

at once."

"Do you know anything of your little Tommy and Polly?"

"No. They are dead?" and Sallie's face grew white to

the lips.

These two children were the youngest of the family, and numbered only some six summers and four summers, respec-

tively. Of Polly, Sallie was passionately fond.

"No, not dead; only missing," replied Tom hastily. "They have been missing ever since you left, and your mother is in such a way about them, that Mr. Godfrey sent me off to see if they had followed you."

"Oh, no! they could not have followed us far, you know, they are so little, even if they had seen us start. But they did not; and, as far as I know, they were at home when I

came away."

"They are not now. Your mother is in terrible grief, and will have it that they have wandered into the forest and got lost."

"Öh, dear, dear!" said Sallie, sitting down and beginning

to cry. But Tom had another suggestion ready.

"Where are all the rest of them?"

"Gone off in different directions—some into the woods, and others on to the hills."

"Ah! well; see if some of them don't bring the little

ones back. It's my opinion that some of your party will meet with them. At any rate, I'll wait till they come back, and then ride home with the news, whether they are found or not."

Tom ate a hearty tea, making great inroads into the eatables, and discussing them with a genuine hungry relish. Sallie wondered how he could eat, with the uncertainty there was hanging over the fate of her little brother and sister; but Tom was of a hopeful turn of mind, and beside, nothing ever interfered with his digestion. Soon after he had satisfied himself, the members of the party came dropping in, though slowly, and to each, Sallie put the same anxious question. As the answer came from them all in the negative, the case seemed darker than ever, and when, finally, Alfred and Harry Godfrey, the last of the party, came back unaccompanied by the little wanderers, it was tolerably certain that they had not been within their ken, as each couple had rambled to a considerable distance, so covering in the aggregate a great extent of country. Tom Higgins could only conclude that the little ones had never been in this direction at all. He therefore jumped on his horse directly, and turned towards Burntie Glen.

"I will ride home as fast as I can," said he. "You will come on as quickly as possible too. If the children should be lost, we shall need all the help we can get to scour the woods and hills. But I hope they are snugly at home again

by this time."

Tom was soon lost in the gathering mists of evening, while speculation was rife as to the whereabouts of the children, and the little party, lately so merry, was full of anxious misgiving. As quickly as might be they pushed towards home, and arrived only to find commotion and alarm. As Alfred leaped down from the wagon he saw Mostyn, who came towards them with a pale face.

"Have you seen them, my man?"

"No, God grant that we may soon! We must get torches and start at once."

A woman stood near sobbing and wringing her hands. It was Mrs. Mostyn, and Sallie went toward her with a cry of anguish.

# CHAPTER XXXVL

#### THE SEARCH.

"OII, mother! Are they still away?"

"Ay, ay, child! It seems to me that my heart is like

to break!"

"But how long have you missed them, mother?" inquired Sallie, who, to an ardent, impulsive temperament, united a

passionate love for her little brother and sister.

"Nearly ever since you went away. We hoped that they had gone after you, and thought that perhaps you might have picked them up. So Tom Higgins was sent off at once, and we quite expected that he would have found them on your track; but when he went on and found you, and returned without tidings of the children, we were forced to conclude that they had wandered into the woods and got lost." And Mrs. Mostyn's tears broke out afresh.

"But what are they going to do, mother?"

"Don't you see, child? They are going to send out search-parties. There is your father going off with one."

The inclosure was filled with an excited group of people, including nearly all the persons on the station, conspicuous among whom were Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Mostyn, planning routes and procedure for the search-parties, of whom they had now made up three. Mostyn himself headed one, and started for the forest; Mr. Godfrey and Alfred headed the other, designed to scour the hills; and Tom Higgins and Charlic Capern took the leadership of the third, which was intended to traverse the low-lying lands of the district.

Before starting, Mr. Godfrey mounted a clump of wood and gave a few concise directions to the searchers. Each party took firearms, which, however, were not to be made use of until the children were found, when salutes were to be fired, to inform the other parties. The Australian "coocy" was to be adopted, and horns were to be blown, which, together with the shouts and calls of the men,

would inform the little ones of the vicinity of those in search of them. As Mr. Godfrey concluded, he wished them God-speed, and dismissed them to their exciting task, with the fervent hope that Providence would smile upon them, and quickly reward their efforts with success. As the parties set off at a swinging speed, they gave a hearty cheer for Mr. Godfrey, and begged the poor weeping mother to keep herself up until she saw the result. She promised to do so, but immediately the words were out of her mouth she burst into an uncontrollable flood of tears, and as she watched the retreating forms of the men, she wailed out: "My poor children will perish with want and cold? It seems to me that I shall never see them alive again."

"I can scarcely think that they have wandered far enough to be missing long," rejoined Mrs. Godfrey. "Little children like them cannot travel very far, you know."

"But you see, Mrs. Godfrey, they have been gone ever since the morning. You may depend upon it, that they went into the woods gathering berries, and were so engaged that they never noticed how long they had been gone, nor in what direction the station lies. Then when they turned to come home they wandered further off, and have been wandering ever since."

"It may be," returned Mrs. Godfrey, "but they cannot

be more than a few miles away."

"That's it; but then you see, Mrs. Godfrey, our people don't know in what direction to go. I make no doubt but that if they knew the exact spot where the children are to be found, we should get them home again before midnight, but now it's all guesswork."

So it was, for the daylight was dying fast, and one by one the stars were peeping out. In those southern regions there is very little twilight; once the day is gone, the mantle of night envelops all nature with surprising rapidity. Away in the distance could be seen the lighted torches of the searchers, flitting hither and thither as they were borne aloft, while the shrill notes of the men as they gave the peculiar Australian call or "cooey," made the night vocal. To say the least of it, it was exceedingly doubtful whether they would find the lost children that night.

# CHAPTER XXXVI.

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#### THE SEARCH.

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The search was commenced at the wrong time, and the proverbial difficulty of "looking for a needle in a rick of hay" was not worse than this. Had the searchers commenced their task by daylight, they would have had a tenfold chance of success; but now the probability was that the children had crept into some sheltered nook, and had there fallen asleep. Polly Mostyn, with her six-year old wisdom, would doubtless shelter Tommy—who was not yet four—as best she could, hoping and trusting that the morning would bring them help. If the children were asleep the searchers must really come upon them, or they would not find them, seeing that there would be no answering cry to the shouts and calls of the men.

The women and girls looked after the parties, straining their eyes through the darkness, striving to distinguish the receding torches. But by-and-by they all passed out of sight and nothing was to be heard, save a distant cry or shout, coming apparently from the depths of the forest, which sounds were varied occasionally by the blowing of horns. But after a while even these sounds died away, and the whole country around lay desolate and still. There might have been a chance of distinguishing the reports of firearms, had they been discharged, but the absence of these sounds told its own tale.

Wearily the night passed, and the morning broke dim and gray. Mrs. Mostyn and Sallie remained at Mrs. Godfrey's house, the latter doing all she could in the way of ministering refreshment and comfort, to keep up the poor afflicted mother's courage. Florence did the same with Sallie: but the poor girl's fondness for her little brother and sister manifested itself in repeated outbreaks of tears. Just as it was light enough to distinguish the country around, the sound of feet was heard, and on looking out they saw Tom Higgins and Charlie returning with their party. There was no need to question them as to their success; the men's dejected silent manner told that they had not found the children.

"Oh! Charlie," said Mrs. Godfrey, "cannot you find them?"

"We have not succeeded as yet. We have searched

over an immense tract of country since we started, but cannot see any traces of the children. We found an old basket once, which I thought might put us upon their track—indeed I jumped at the sight, thinking we had really got upon the right scent at last; but Tom recognized it as being the fragments of one he used to carry a twelvemonth ago. So we were done again. Then we thought we would return and see if the others had found the children."

As he spoke, the men went into the hut, and sat down wearily, glad enough to receive from Florence and Sallie the welcome cups of tea which were quickly in readiness.

"Your party is the only one which has returned," said Mrs. Godfrey. "We have watched and waited the whole night, but have got no tidings. What will you do now?"

"Start again," returned Charlie with characteristic energy.
"It must never be said that Englishmen allowed two infants to die in the forest for lack of effort to save them, eh, mates?"

"You're right, captain," replied the men. "We'll find

them, sure enough."

"For my part," added Tom Higgins, "I don't mean to rest till they are brought in to the station again, dead or alive."

"Bravo!" said Charlie Capern; "but we'll pray God that

we may see them brought back alive."

A short half hour sufficed for their refreshment, and then the men addressed themselves to their task again. Just as they were starting, however, they descried in the dim distance the other two bodies of searchers returning, like themselves, and, as the signals of success were wanting, doubtless without any tidings of the wanderers. They were to start on another track now, under Tom Higgins' direction; but before doing so they took a wide sweep, so as to meet the returning parties.

"Any success?" called Tom Higgins.

"No," answered Mostyn. "Have you?"
"No. How has the other party fared?"

"The same. We can see nothing of the children yet."

"Guess we'd better try again, then. Never say die!

You get a good cup of tea down at the station, and see if

you ain't up in better spirits then;" with which piece of advice Tom and his party turned off to their own special district.

Haggard and worn as the men all looked as they entered Mr. Godfrey's hut-poor Mostyn especially-they yet expressed unabated determination to find the children before they took any rest, and to bring them back unhurt, if possible. Their quest had been a very dreary one, through the long hours of night, and, in fact, almost hopeless; yet, with true humanity and pluck, they had never once talked of giving in, but now that daylight had dawned, they felt more sure of success, and, consequently, more stimulated Like their predecessors they took but little time for rest or refreshment; then, carrying some food and drink with them, they started off again in contrary directions. As far as possible, they were to take the different districts of land assigned to each party the night previous, and to re-explore them with the aid of daylight.

Florence and Sallie also wandered off on their own special tour, making their way to certain haunts familiar to the children of the squatters, hoping to find the little things snugly hidden there, but in vain. No sign or trace of them could be found, and about mid-day the girls returned more despondent than they cared to own. Mrs. Mostyn was still with Mrs. Godfrey, her own home remaining tenantless until this trouble was ended, as it soon must be, one way or another. Such little children could not walk many miles away in a straight line, and it was not likely that anybody had stolen them. Such a thing might have happened in certain districts of a metropolis, but who would care to be burdened with young children, away in the wilds of Australia? Then it appeared pretty plain that the little things must be wandering about in the depths of the forest, hither and thither, unable to find their way out, or to strike out for themselves a track which should bring them out into the open country. They may be at this very time not more than eight or ten miles from home,—but then in what direction? That was the problem.

The shades of evening drew on again, and, one by one, most of the searchers came in, weary, dispirited, and sad. They could give no tidings of the children, and if Mostyn's own party could not bring better news, the search would be suspended until the men had obtained a night's rest. tracted with grief, Mrs. Mostyn went out, almost without knowing whither, hoping against hope, that her husband's party might yet bring some good news. Hark! As she listened, she fancied that she heard the distant report of a gun, succeeded by another, and yet another. She listened again, with her heart beating tumultuously, wildly hoping that she might not be deceived. Then the signals came again, report after report, and as they drew nearer were accompanied by shouts and hurrahs in token of success. There was no mistake now; she even fancied she heard her own husband's voice hurraling among the others; so turning back into the hut, she staggered to the table exclaiming, "They're found! They're found! Thank God! they're found."

En masse, they rushed out to meet the coming party, only Mrs. Godfrey, who was detained by the deathly paleness of Mrs. Mostyn's face, and her obvious state of semi-insensibility, remaining behind. The revulsion of feeling, occasioned by a sudden access of joy, after more than thirty hours of anguish and bitter foreboding, had proved too much for the poor mother's strength, and as the reports of the guns drew nearer and nearer to the station, and the words "Found!" "Found!" could be distinctly understood amidst the clamour of voices, she turned faint, and fell heavily into Mrs. Godfrey's arms.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIL

# THE JOY OF FINDING THE LOST.

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Cut in the desert He heard its cry—
Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.
And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gates of leaven,
'Rejoice! I have found my sheep!'
And the angels echoed around the throne,
'Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own.'"—Miss Clephane.

FORTUNATELY, some restoratives were at hand, and Mrs. Godfrey applied them with such success, that Mrs. Mostyn quickly recovered. Strength and consciousness returned to her again, as the excited and jubilant procession turned into Mr. Godfrey's inclosure. Recognizing the voice of her husband, amid the din, she rushed out, although so staggeringly, that Mrs. Godfrey feared for her safety, and met him bearing Polly in his arms. Immediately behind was Paul Mostyn, who carried little Tommy—the children clinging to their protectors with a confiding eagerness, born of the terror and suffering which they had so long endured. The mother laid a hand on each as if she could not forego the sight of either of the children, even for one moment, and kissed them wildly.

"Come along, mother," said Mostyn's deep gruff voice; "let us sit down, and then you may have them both. Sure enough we have had a scare, but I'll tell ye how we came to find them in a minute, if you'll let me take breath."

All the members of the two other search parties were crowding around the successful group, plying them with questions, and demanding the particulars of their search.

But Mr. Mostyn and his party were thoroughly worn out, albeit flushed with success. Twenty-four hours of continued walking, diving into the recesses of the forest, united to the anxiety which naturally attended their quest, proved quite a trial for the endurance of the strongest man among them. As they wearily threw themselves, in different attitudes, upon the benches, or the floor, the women and girls plied them with tea and food, both of which were eagerly received. Mrs. Godfrey and Mrs. Mostyn, however, devoted themselves to the children. The poor little things were eating, laughing, and sobbing, at intervals; they had as little control over their feelings as the rest, and had suffered, perhaps, more. Between her sobs, and smiles, Polly was trying to make her mother understand how she had protected Tommy, during the long dark night which they had spent in the woods. Polly was the elder of the two, and as such, had taken upon her the work of succouring and cheering her little brother during their involuntary exile. Said she: "I took off my cloak and wrapped it round Tommy last night; and he laid under a tree and slept, while I kept watch over him."

"But could you manage to keep awake all night?"

"Yes, I looked up at the stars through the trees—but I couldn't see many of them, though—and I remembered all the little hymns that I had learnt about the stars, and said them over to myself to keep awake."

"Weren't you afraid?"

"Yes;" and a little shiver ran through her frame. "I was cold, too; but I knew that you wouldn't rest till you had found us. So I said my prayers—Tommy was too tired and sleepy to say his—and waited till you came."

"But suppose we hadn't been able to find you, what

then?"

"Oh! God would have sent somebody to find us. He loves little children too much to let them die in the woods. You told me in Sunday-school, Miss Florence, how much God loves little children."

Polly was one of Florence's favourite pupils, and as she heard this she felt a new thrill of affection for the dear child. Surely her teaching had not been in vain, there.

"But how came you to wander away at first?" asked Alfred.

"I don't know. Tommy and I, we went gathering wild grapes, and before we knew it we had got quite lost in the woods. We turned round then, but we couldn't find our way out." These last words came rather drowsily from the child, for the warmth of the fire was producing its natural effect; indeed, considering the exhaustion produced by wandering and fasting, she had proved herself remarkable for her endurance. Tommy was already fast asleep in his mother's arms.

"Instead of finding their way out," said Mostyn, who by this time had lit his pipe and drawn nearer the cheerful blaze, "they must have got further and further in. It must have been quite ten miles away that we found them, and I should think that some of our party passed by the spot

where they were sleeping, last night."

"Ye see, now, the good of a fire," said Tom Higgins. "If the little critters had only managed to make a bit of fire,

you would soon have fallen across them."

"But then they had nothing to strike a light with," said "I believe that Polly would have managed it, had she only got hold of a flint and steel. That child is uncommonly quick, mother, there's no question about it. Well, as I was saying, we must have passed the children at least once last night, and I can't make out how it was that they didn't hear our calls. Polly must have been asleep, though she maintains that she kept awake all the time. But be that as it may, it wasn't till this afternoon that we came upon them. I had almost given up the hope of finding them, and my mates were talking of going home till tomorrow, when we came across a winding sort of path, leading into the thickest and darkest part of the forest. had not come across this before, I felt sure, and I said so to my mates. So we struck down it, and by-and-by came to a place from where we could hear the cries and shouts of children, seemingly about forty yards to the left of us. We didn't wait to consider, mother, not we! We dashed in amongst the thicket, and fought our way straight to them; and there, under a big tree, we saw them sitting and crying. I can't

tell ye how we felt; I s'pose the rest didn't feel as I did, quite—it warn't natural that they should; but I thought I should jest have turned faint. All the blood in my body seemed to run in a heap, and I didn't see anything but those two children afore me. We ran up to them; I took one of them up, and somebody else took the other, and we set up a shout, such as the old woods have never heard before, I'm thinking. I don't feel rightly myself, now; I'd never like such another experience, I know."

The poor man was fairly bewildered with joy and fatigue; but I think his little ones never seemed so dear to him as at that moment. As for the mother and Sallie, they were nursing the two children with deepest, fullest content

depicted on their countenances.

After hearing Mostyn's tale, the group slowly dispersed, and by twos and threes they moved off to their own huts. However, the circumstance was one long to be remembered

in the annals of Burntie Glen.

Next morning Mr. Marsden arrived upon the scene, it being the time of his periodical visit. Beside visiting the settlers and preaching to them, he had now another most pleasing duty to perform in inspecting the school, and talking to the school children. A bush Sunday-school was a novelty in his district, but none the less was it a blessing, and the pleasantest hours that he knew at the station were those spent within its precincts. Florence had obtained and appropriated for its use the large airy kitchen belonging to their hut, and within its walls the twenty or more of scholars and teachers found comfortable quarters. It was pleasant to step in among the classes and listen to the expounding of Bible truths by those who had but recently commenced to learn the sweetness of them for themselves. In watering others, the souls of these young teachers had been themselves They were fairly supplied with lesson-sheets, hymn-books, Bibles, and pictures, all of which had been · sent from Manchester by Mr. Lisburne, and were read and pondered over until the lessons they conveyed were burnt into their minds and memories. Charlie Capern and Alfred took their part in teaching while at Burntie Glen, and as the children paid remarkable attention to their words, it is not too much to suppose that the annals of their seafaring experiences were gone over to satisfy the voracious demands of the scholars for "stories."

Mr. Marsden, as was his wont, put the children through an examination. They acquitted themselves admirably, and in return he gave them his "little sermon," as he was wont to call his address to them. Being interspersed, however, with questions, anecdotes, and hymns, it was anything but wearisome to the little ones, while the elders caught themselves listening to it with absorbing interest, as if he were telling them something never heard of before. With ready tact, he seized on the incident which I have related to you, and, recounting again the principal feature in the case, went on to illustrate and apply it. Said he: "We were all lost once, and Jesus came to seek us out. You know where Jesus lived-high in heaven, with His Father and all the holy angels. We, who should have loved and served God, wandered away from Him, committing sin, and doing wicked works, until we were at a great distance from God—so great that it seemed as if we should never be brought back again. But somebody then came to seek us and to save us. was this?"

"Jesus Christ," said several little ones.

Jesus knew that the wanderings of mankind would end in death-eternal death; and out of love for us, He offered to bear our punishment, so as to make our way back to God easy and acceptable. So He died a cruel death upon the cross; buffeted, spit upon, spurned, despised, and at last killed by wicked men, He offered Himself up to God, an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. This was how He came to rescue the lost. This was how He, the Good Shepherd, gave His life for the sheep. Don't you think we ought to love Him, above all others? Doesn't it seem shameful that we think so little of our best Friend and Saviour? Don't you think that Polly Mostyn will think of her deliverers, as she grows up? Won't little . Tommy sometimes say, when he is a man, 'I was lost in the woods once, but some kind friends came and found me, or I should have died there?' Those children will think of their deliverance after they are grown up to manhood and womanhood, and think of it with gratitude. So should we think often of Jesus, and what He has done for us. We should give Him our hearts' best love, and serve Him with our whole lives. You little ones there," he said, pointing to a group of the youngest among them, "you are sought by this Good Shepherd. He sends me to tell you of his love to-day, and

to ask you to love and serve him."

Mr. Marsden's sermonette was not tiresome or dry. The children hung upon his words till the end, and some of the shepherds who had taken part in the search three days previously, and had rejoiced over the finding of the children, rould not help wiping their eyes, as they listened to Mr. Marsden's touching exposition of how Christ comes to seek and to save the "lost." Some of them had been "lost" for a great many years. Many a long summer and winter had rolled away since they had heard the sound of salvation at home in their own land; and this inroad upon the worldliness, the brutishness, the degradation of their daily lives, arrested their attention. For, Florence's weekly ministrations had constituted such an inroad; and not only so, but the reiteration of eternal truths in their ears had raised up a bulwark against vice, over which they almost feared to leap. Hers was truly the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Unconsciously almost to herself, she was doing quite as great a work among the adults of the station as among the children. Judging by appearances, the day would yet come when there should be a church gathered and planted in this wilderness from among those outcasts and sinners. Generations yet unborn would have reason to bless the faithful labours of Florence Godfrey.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### HARRY CONNOR'S PRIVATE STUDIES.

"Come, my man, this is no place for you. You had better make the best of your way home as quickly as you can.

You will be drenched with the rain, before long."

"Monsieur is very good, but Pierre has no home. died two months ago, and they carried him away to some Ah! I forget the name, but I go to see his grave cemetery. on Sundays."

"What is your name, my lad?" "Pierre Dupresne, monsieur."

"And how old are you?"

"Going fast into fourteen. Ma mère used to keep up my birthdays when we lived in France. That was my home la belle France. Your Angleterre is cold, wet, miserable ah, miserable indeed!"

"That is because you have no friends. England is a beautiful country to those who have friends and home. Does your mother know that your father is dead? Why

do you not go back to her?"

"Ah! Pierre would soon go back, but the mother is not She died first."

"Then what have you done for a living since your father died ?"

"Sang, sometimes—sometimes begged. Ah! monsieur does not know what it is to live in the streets, to get wet through, to feel hungry all the time, and have no money?"

"No, I do not," returned Harry Connor, for it was he who thus interrogated the poor little French wanderer, and then, very quickly, the life of years ago flashed upon his mind. He remembered how often he had known what it was to go barefooted, hungry, and cold, because of poverty, and his father's intemperance. And because of that remembrance, he felt more tenderly towards the little waif whom chance, or rather providence, had thrown across

his path.

Harry was known among the Stainforth's employés as a rising young man. True, he was still in his teens, but he could have been trusted, and was, to an extent far beyond his years, so marked were his steadiness, capacity for business, and cleverness at book-keeping. Three or four times his salary had been increased, until now he was receiving what seemed to him to be a little fortune. Mrs. Connor was full of rejoicing day by day, doing all she could to shed the light of a happy home upon her boy's path, and believing all the while in her heart of hearts, that there never was such another boy as her Harry. Everything that he did was right—indeed, sometimes, had it not been for his native good sense, and innate modesty, I fear he would have been carried away by conceit. But such a thing seemed never to enter his head; the swift breezes of prosperity found his barque well ballasted with humility, sound principles, and intelligence, and so went safely along the voyage of life, avoiding those dangers which would else have surely caused him shipwreck.

It was a thick, dreary and chill November evening The fog seemed like Egyptian darkness, as if it could be felt, and the sleety rain penetrated wrapper and overcoat. Harry was hurrying along towards his home, sure of a warm welcome and a bright fireside there, when his eye caught sight of a pitiful, shrinking little form, trying to huddle itself away from the rain and the cold, underneath some planks by the side of a half-built house. The sight attracted his attention, and without stopping to listen to prudent second thoughts, he resolved to befriend the lad, who by his own confession was a mere waif of humanity, a homeless,

orphaned wanderer.

"But how are you going to manage to-night for a shelter?"

"I shall creep in here. It is much too cold in the street, and the police will see that I go on. 'Go on,' they ever say, and if we do not, they do what you call, 'run us in.'"

Harry Connor smiled as little Pierre evinced his acquaintance with police phraseology. It told a tale of itself.

"Will you come with me to-night? I will give you shelter and a supper."

"You are not—beg pardon, monsieur—you are not one

police agent?"

Harry laughed heartily. "No, indeed. Do I look like one? I am just going home from the office where I have been hard at work all day, and there I shall find a good fire, a warm cup of tea, and a kind mother. Now will you go with me? You may if you like."

"Will the good mother make excuse? will she say I must not come?" The poor lad could not conceive of generosity

so open nor of kindness so disinterested.

'She will not. You will like my mother before you have been in her company ten minutes. Now then, my lad, which is it to be?"

"I will come, monsieur," decided the waif, creeping up to Harry's side. "Perhaps the people won't see too much

my ragged attire."

"No, I should think not. It is raining too fast for that. Come under my umbrella, and step it out, there's a good lad."

Pierre did "step it out," feeling quite assured now that he was in reality going to a good Samaritan's house. Perhaps, however, he had never read that parable; if not, some instinct led him to divine that Harry Connor was

intent only on doing good.

Mrs. Connor lifted up her eyes in amazement as Harry entered, accompanied by his strange companion. Not for one moment did she anticipate an addition to her household, yet she could not help wondering what her son's manner towards the boy signified. Inviting Pierre to the fire, as he stood gazing round the comfortable apartment with a hunted sort of look in his eyes, Harry took his mother's hand, and motioned her to follow him.

As soon as they were outside, he said: "I suppose you are surprised, mother, at my bringing home such a poor little beggar; but the truth is I discovered him crouching under some planks, trying to get a little shelter from the rain, and on my questioning him, I found that he had neither home nor friends. Beside this, mother, he is French;

so that he is really a stranger in a strange land. His father died recently, and his mother died some long time since, he says. We'll give him shelter here, mother, if you will, for a few days, until I can find out what to do with him. I could not find it in my heart to turn my back upon him this miserable night; and I knew you would feel the same. I cannot forget the time when Mr. Lisburne befriended me; and perhaps I may do a little in return for this boy."

"You are right, Harry," cried Mrs. Connor, while from her face beamed forth strong sympathy for the little French lad. "You are right. If we can do anything for this boy we will, for the sake of what has been done for you. We

should be ungrateful if we didn't."

As she said this, they re-entered the room, where Pierre was engaged rubbing his hands over the cheerful blaze, and mentally wishing he had such a nice home as this. I have already told you that Harry was prosperous in his worldly affairs, and his home reflected that prosperity. A decent mirror over the mantel-piece, a neat, cheap carpet and hearth-rug, a good set of chairs, including two easy ones, and a nice white table-cloth upon the tea-table, whereon was spread a homely but comfortable repast—all served to reflect the prosperity with which Harry had been blessed, and in which his mother so gratefully rejoiced.

"You may stop here till we can find you a home, Pierre," said Harry; "if I find your story to be true. I shall make inquiries in the morning, and will tell you afterwards what

I intend to do with you."

"You will find I speak all the truth," replied Pierre. "Monsieur will never find Pierre Dupresne speaking stories. The good mother at home told Pierre better than that." The boy seemed to dwell upon the memory of his mother with absolute enthusiasm. Her kindness and love must have formed a bright and green oasis in his miserable young life.

"What did your father do for a living, Pierre?" questioned

Harry.

"He was an organ-grinder, monsieur. He was paid by the man who asked him to come over from France. The organ was not his own; when he died, I had nothing but just a few shillings my father took out from inside the lining of his coat. That was just before he died. Ah! my father would grieve for me!"

"Have you forgotten your own language-French, I

mean?"

"Ah! no, monsieur. French is one beautiful language. So much better than English, if you do not mind my saying it."

"Certainly not," returned Harry, much amused, as he heaped the food on the boy's plate. "Now, while you talk you must eat."

Pierre did eat, as only a boy could eat who had known what it was to be famished for some weeks previously. Mrs. Connor looked on, with her old kind motherliness of feeling.

"It will do you good, my poor boy," said she. "Eat and drink as much as ever you can. Your mother is dead

as well as your father?"

"Yes, madame. The good mother went to heaven some long time since. Père Antoine said it. She was a good Catholic."

"But we are not," replied Harry. "We are what you call Protestants."

At which Pierre crossed himself very devoutly, remembering, doubtless, the consequences of associating with heretics. Whoever the mother was, she had indoctrinated her son with her own faith, even in his childhood. He looked up at his host and hostess as if he would read their faces, and discover for himself their true principles. It is surprising how quickly children read a face. After a moment's quiet reflection, confidence seemed to return to the boy's mind and he said, "But you are good people, if you are Protestants. You would not be so kind to me if you were bad."

"I hope we are good people," returned Mrs. Connor. "If you stay long enough to know more of us, you will find that we would do you good and not evil, as far as it is in our power. But Protestants love God, Pierre, and Catholics cannot do more."

Pierre was not in a mood to engage in a theological discussion that night. His tired and weakened frame,

weakened by exposure and hunger, craved rest and repose. Mrs. Connor observed this, and after tea she furnished him with some dry underclothing, and made up a warm bed in the corner of Harry's room, into which Pierre very quickly crept, murmuring his thanks to the "good mother." In another quarter of an hour he was lost in dream-land.

As Harry sat at his table studying that night—for he devoted a couple of hours to self-improvement every evening -a thought crossed his mind which made his heart beat more quickly than ever. He was bending forward looking at the sleeping boy, when it suddenly flashed into his mind that here was a means by which he could learn French. He was almost proficient in short-hand; grammar and geography were on his list of subjects; and if he could take history and French, he should be sufficiently qualified to command a much higher post in the office. Could not Pierre teach him French in return for the shelter of a home? Yes; he decided that the boy should stay, if he were willing, until he could obtain some light situation, and so earn means to support himself. Meanwhile, he should attend a day-school, after being suitably attired; and in the evenings he and Pierre would study together. French would be a great acquisition to him, and who could tell what the consequence of his learning it would be.

At supper-time he disclosed his cogitations to his mother. She wondered in her motherly sort of way why Harry should be so fond of studying. Her sole fear was that he would injure his health, at which Harry laughingly replied, "that brain-workers generally lived to a good old age."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## MR. LISBURNE'S DAILY WORK.

"Guiding the weak with trusty hand All the day long and all the night, Saving men's lives by wondrous might, In storm and sunshine, dark and light. So that the Lord of heaven looked down. And looked no more with dreadful frown, But with a smile, and said, Lo! he Hath found a way of serving Me."

- The Legend of St. Christopher.

"I sometimes wonder if I am really doing God service, for I see little beside sadness, pain, and disease. My increasing duties at the infirmary have almost cut off my attendance at the Sunday-school. I contrive to get there for a half day now and then; but as a rule of late, my class has been looked after by substitutes. I worry myself about it to no purpose, because I believe that no class can prosper truly which is not constantly under the supervision of its own Substitutes are all very well, but the boys get into the habit of careless attendance, remissness as to lessons, and inattention while at school. For these reasons I have once and again decided to give up my class; but the superintendent does not see why I should do so, and will not hear of my resignation. Beside that, I find deep down in my heart a strong, ardent love for Sunday-school work, and all pertaining to it, and therein lies the secret of my still holding on.

"But, like St. Christopher of old, I believe I have found a way of serving God in my daily work. I will just give you a leaf from my day's work yesterday, from which you will judge that my time is pretty well occupied. The consulting-room opened for out-patients about nine o'clock. First case: A poor widow, with her only son, incurably ill in decline. I saw it the first minute I was able to look in

his face, but dared not tell them so. There was such a pleading look in the mother's eyes, and such silent, voiceless agony in the lad's glance, that I felt it cruel then to demolish their hopes. The lad was about seventeen, and had been almost her support from the age of thirteen. Indeed, he had worked too hard and too long, and the seeds of disease being in his constitution before, they developed only too rapidly. I ordered the boy into the infirmary at once, as it is our last chance of prolonging his life a little. The mother begged so hard to come every day to see him.

"Second case: A poor man with heart-disease. He knows—or fears—that he is dying, and as he looks round on his little children, all of whom need him sorely, his heart is like to break. The big tears coursed down his cheeks as he told me this, and begged me to do something for him. I promised him to do what I could, although it was only in the way of alleviation. It does seem mysterious, these ways of God with men. Here is a man who would wish for nothing better than health and opportunity to labour for his family, cut off from active toil and almost laid aside by

a subtle and incurable malady.

"Third case: A young girl with spinal complaint. has been suffering for many months past with strange and puzzling symptoms, but could not understand what it all meant. On recounting to me her various pains, however, I could soon find the interpretation. Poor thing! she may linger for years in suffering, for all my medical skill will not avail to cure her. She told me she was a milliner, and worked long hours in a crowded workroom at one of our most fashionable millinery establishments. She is the eldest of five children, the father dead, and the mother earning a little by taking in washing. Of what use is it for me to prescribe sea air, and strengthening medicines, to one whose every penny is so urgently needed for bread? These poor folks have not a chance to get well; everything seems against them; for with the constant demands upon their scanty earnings for absolute necessities, it is as much as they can do to live from hand to mouth when they are well. When the supply is cut off by illness, the poor body has not only to fight against the malady, but to endure semi-starvation

as well. I said to her, 'Can you come into the infirmary for a few weeks?'

"'Please, sir, my little brothers and sisters need my earnings so much that I cannot be spared unless I am really ill. Could you not give me some medicine as an outpatient?'

""Yes, child, I could; but you would not get much good by that means. You need rest, refreshment, change, and all the rest of it. How will you get that, situated as you

are?'

"'I must go without, sir. But if you could give me a little medicine, perhaps I should be better. Do not compel me to leave my home, sir, for they would starve if I did.'

"So I gave in, knowing as I do that the 'little medicine' will do no good whatever without proper treatment in other respects. Ah! how fondly do these poor people cling to the delusion that a 'little medicine' will do all healing work for them, when they ought to leave work entirely on one side for a time. Would that some of our rich idlers could exchange places with them for one month. They would not then lie on the sofa, perusing fashionable three-volume novels, studying fancied symptoms of illness until they deluded themselves into the belief that they were ill?

"Fourth case: I am called suddenly to set two broken legs for a little wee thing of six or seven years of age. While playing in the street, a swiftly-passing cab knocked her down and went over her limbs, fracturing them both. Her parents were in great agony of mind, and the dear child suffered much. It was a trial to my endurance and nerve, for I felt great drops of perspiration roll off my forehead as I operated. The screams of the child went to my heart; I should have administered chloroform had it been safe, but it was not. I felt at the time that I would gladly have taken the pain myself to relieve the little sufferer if that could have been.

"These are only samples of the cases which come almost daily under my care. Indeed, I do not know an hour of the day in which I am not doing my utmost to alleviate pain and suffering. I strive to do it so that my daily work shall be an offering to God. I think the medical profession offers a fine field for serving God in this way; and sometimes when I fret because I cannot attend as I would to my Sunday-school duties, I comfort myself with the thought that I am doing my best in that position which God would have me fill.

"And now, darling, as to yourself. Has not our love been tested long enough? I am in a position to make a home, such a home as is worthy of you, and I think it would be much the best plan for us to decide to live in England. If I came out to Australia to reside, I should have to work up a practice, and possibly may not attain the favourable position which I hold now, for years. All this must be considered; still I would not unduly press you to return to an English home, against your will, if you really prefer an Australian one. But please decide, dearest, as quickly as you can, that I may lay my plans accordingly. One thing is certain, and that is this. Your absence, instead of weakening the bond of affection between us, has made it more tender and more strong. I pray that our lives may be firmly welded together in love; and that for many years to come we may be the joy and rejoicing of each other's hearts.

"I have not seen my uncle for a long time. The poor old man ages fast—so people tell me. I would be friendly if he would permit me; but he refuses all overtures on my

part."

So ran Mr. Lisburne's letter to Florence. The time of their separation had been fruitful of good to them both. They had gained in that knowledge of the world and of human nature, which is necessary to a successful and useful career. Beside this, they had proved the reality of their affection toward each other, and had shown that it depended not on mere externals, nor on the brilliancy of Mark's worldly prospects. Florence would have been as well content to take Mark as a hard-working city surgeon, ministering to poor folks, as with a long list of titled patients pouring extravagant fees into his pocket for dancing attendance upon real or fancied ailments. As his letter proved, he

was full of work—work which he tried to make a daily offering to his Maker.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Tom Higgins had met with an adventure which promised to be a very serious one for him. Wandering in the bush one day, it suddenly occurred to him that he might make an addition to his store of eggs. He had been making a collection of Australian eggs for some time, with a view of taking them home to his acquaintances, if he should be so fortunate as to return to the old country. On this special afternoon he was off duty, and was out for a ramble in the By the side of the path stood a hollow trunk of a tree, which seemed to invite Tom's exploration. doubting but that he should find some nest inside, the youth thrust his hand down and commenced to grope about for eggs. Judge of his alarm when a quick, sharp bite warned him that danger was present, and he drew forth his hand with a yellow snake hanging to the fore-finger. With horror he recognized it at once to be the most deadly snake which the Australian continent could furnish. His cheek blanched under the prospect of speedy death, as he shook the reptile off, and remembered what he had heard concerning its power of inflicting deadly hurt. There was the bite; fiercely raged the pain, and, unless it could be cauterized, he would scarcely live to reach home again.

The yellow snake was killed by a well-aimed blow from a good stick; but that done, Tom sat down to think for a moment. Not for long, though; for if the venom were not arrested at once, it would permeate his entire system and cause speedy death. Luckily,—or rather providentially, as he afterwards thought—he had sharpened his large clasp-knife that morning, and it was now keen-edged enough for anything. Taking it out of his pocket, he relentlessly cut the finger off, while the great drops of perspiration, rolling down his face, bore witness to his agony. Would God be merciful to him, and grant him deliverance from the death which threatened him? Tom Higgins found words in which to clothe this petition at that terrible juncture.

The crimson stream ran from the severed arteries, while the pain raged terribly. Such unskilful amputation would have put to the test the powers of the strongest constitution. Indeed, once or twice he felt faint; and then thoughts of his old home came across him. The wild liberty of Australian life lost its attractiveness, as he contemplated the possibility of speedy death. The first thing to be done was to stop the flow of blood, if possible, and Tom bound his ragged handkerchief around the wrist and finger-stump as scientifically as he could, considering that he could only use one hand and his teeth. Then he made the best of his way home, before the loss of blood should cause total faintness.

He reached Burntie Glen somewhat totteringly, for the effort was as much as he could manage. As he entered the enclosure, Mrs. Godfrey saw him, and his pale, haggard appearance attracted her attention at once.

"What is the matter with you, Tom? you look ill!"

"Look here, missus!" and the young man held up his wounded hand. "I didn't know how to get home,—I didn't, certain." And as he spoke the words, he followed her into the hut, whither she had gone, immediately on catching sight of the wound, to inform her husband. Almost before the explanation was given, they had succeeded in bandaging the mutilated hand, and administering some welcome refreshment. After this, the people of the station flocked eagerly to hear the news, and Tom had to tell his story over and over again.

## CHAPTER XL.

## DICK FOWLER YEARNS FOR HOME.

"And when he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." "—Holy Scri<sub>e</sub>ture.

Tom Higgins was still unable to attend to his duties, and was about the station most of his time, finding it pleasanter than bush life proper. He seemed to be beginning to realize that a civilized Christian kind of life was better than a wandering, dishonest, Arab kind of existence, such as he and his chums had been leading of late years. In spite of his cool, careless, off-hand manner, he had really grown more thoughtful; and since his adventure in the woods, had pondered very seriously over the great mysteries of life and death. It seemed as if Florence would find Tom Higgins to be one among the number won over to Christ and Christianity, out of the scattered and unpromising flock among

which she had been so patiently labouring.

There was another, too, in whose heart the good seed, falling quietly and gently as snow-flakes, or unseen dew, was producing wondrous changes. Dick Fowler was never very conversational: none of his mates dared to say much to him, and he would get very savage when "chaffed." He was always sullen with himself and his lot, and inwardly resented the retributive fate which had sent him there. late, his conduct had been a perpetual enigma to the others. Never very communicative, he had become most taciturn and disagreeable in his moods. Sometimes he would be as of old with his mates, and would smoke and chat in good fellowship; and then would become sullen, morose, fierce, and jealous—seemingly buried in thought, and angrily resenting all interference. The secret was this—though unknown to anybody. The new love for home and friends was taking hold of him, and struggling with the old, wicked, careless, cruel spirit. He was remembering those who at home were once dear to him, and though deserted for many long years, were his still. And so it came to pass that the dissatisfaction induced by his present life, rendered him at times irritable and fierce. He possessed light sufficient to see his own darkness, and was correspondingly despairing.

But, for a long time Dick kept it all to himself.

One night, however, just as Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey were thinking of retiring to rest, a low, unsteady knock came to the door—a knock of shaky, uncertain character, as if the giver of it had scarcely made up his mind whether to enter or not. It did not take them long to answer it, and to their amazement, Dick Fowler presented himself, asking permission to enter. Mr. Godfrey very quickly invited him in, saying, as he did so, "But what is the matter, Fowler? Surely something must be wrong?"

"Well, sir, nothing very wrong; only I'm terribly uneasy, and I thought I'd come and talk it over with you and

the missus—if you had no objection."

"None in the world. What is it, then, that troubles you? Draw up to the fire, and light your pipe, if you will

feel more easy."

You must not think that smoking implied rudeness of behaviour. Nothing of the kind. In those Australian outstations, every man smokes; and he would be a rare exception indeed, who went about, night or day, without the accustomed pipe in his mouth. Mr. Godfrey had used himself to a choice cigar, occasionally, when in Manchester, but since his life in the bush he had discarded cigars, and adopted the more homely pipe. He knew, too, that Dick Fowler would be terribly nonplussed were he to sit for an hour without the pipe, and it was this knowledge that prompted him to extend the permission to the shepherd.

"Well, you said you were uneasy just now," said Mr. Godfrey, when Dick had smoked a few whiffs in silence.

"Are the flocks all right?"

"Oh! yes, master; it's not about them that I'm thinking."

"What is it, then? Can't you tell us?"

"Well, master, this is it. Ye know I've been out here a good many years. I'm a stranger, like, among my folks at

home. Folks ashamed of me, I reckon. But anyhow, natur is natur, I suppose, all the world over, and I should like to see my folks. S'pose I shouldn't hurt 'em much."

Dick blurted out this in short unconnected sentences, as if he really found it difficult to discuss the subject. He had not been possessed of much refinement to start with, and what little he formerly owned, had mostly disappeared since his coming to Australia. He looked as wild as he spoke, too. Hair, long and unkempt; beard, untrimmed and matted; face, browned and coarse by summer's sun and winter's cold; clothes, a compound of rags and skins made into garments, it is true, after the latest bush-fashion, but not exactly acceptable to respectable society; bearing and speech, rough and boorish; these things helped to make up a very disagreeable whole. As Mrs. Godfrey looked at him she thought within herself that it was exceedingly likely his English friends might not care for his reappearance among them.

"Do you feel anxious to see your friends in England

again?"

"Well, yes. Ye see, I've served my time in a convictestablishment, and my friends being decent-like, didn't choose to have me home among them after that, so they've always turned a deaf ear to my wishes on that score. I don't think my wife was so hard on me, as the rest was; but what could she do? She was dependent upon my friends for a living while I was undergoing my sentence, and she had to do as they told her, for her own sake, and the boy's. The little 'un's name is Eddie; he was a nice little feller when I was sent off, and was so fond of me. About so high, you know, and could just prattle. I'd give ten of the best years of my life, if I could only be made all right with them at home again. Why, sometimes at night, I fancy I hear that little feller cry 'Daddy!' 'Daddy!' as he used to do, and feel his little hands, soft-like, over my face. I do now, master."

"So you think your wife would forgive you, and receive you again?"

"Yes; most certain. I knows her; she's forgiving-like, and married me for love—she did. I ought to have been

better to her than I was, but I was a wild chap. Ah! I sowed rough, master, and I'm reaping rough."

"True. But what has put it into your head to think about home and friends? I suppose you have not had any

tidings of them?"

"No; but of late I've heard many things at Miss Florence's readings which I didn't think about before. I don't want to go on living this rough sort of life, 'cause, you see, there's something to come after—and certainly we black sheep don't get many comforts here, whatever may come hereafter; so I should like to turn about, now."

"Why don't you write to her first, then, and see what

her feelings are towards you?"

"Ah! but I did that, master. Ye remember that first Sunday afternoon that the goldfinch was hung outside your door?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"Well, I lay on the grass listening to it, along with my mates, and it sang just as the goldfinch sang at home, years ago. I don't know how it was, but it all rose up before me fresh, you know, and it seemed as if I was a boy again. Well, I went down to our hut, while the other boys rambled off, and writ a letter to my wife. It was a rough writing, I know, and full of great ugly blots; but I couldn't do it better then, 'cause, you see, my hand has got out o' writin', and I could handle a gun a sight better than a pen. I directed it to the place where my wife was livin' last, and sent it off on the sly, like. I didn't want anybody to know it, 'cause I couldn't bear the thought of being laughed at. But I s'pose I couldn't have directed it right; anyhow, no answer has ever come back."

"Perhaps your letter never found your wife. Perhaps she may be dead. There are a dozen reasons why you may not have received a reply after so long an absence. What do you propose to do now?"

"Why, master, first, would ye be kind enough to write a letter for me home? Because, if ye would, I should have

hope o' being listened to."

"I'll willingly write a letter to your friends, if you like. It would give me great pleasure to help you in any way.

And I should think that your friends—especially your wife

-would be glad to hear good news of you."

"We was readin' that story about the Prodigal Son, master, the other Sunday. I think I'm like that young feller, when he came to himself, and found he were starvin', with no friends to care a rush for him."

"But his father—you know he looked for his return."

"Ay, but"—and Dick's face grew dark and troubled—
"Ye know, master, I mean that he had nobody in the 'far country' where he had gone, to care for him. It's just so with me. If I lies down, and dies under a tree, one of these days, who'd care for me? Who'd trouble about it?"

"You forget us. I think we should care a little for you, Dick," said Mrs. Godfrey. She had not spoken before, having been a listener, but an attentive one, to the conver-

sation of the evening.

"Would ye, missus? Thank ye for that, any way. It cheers up a man's heart, if he's ever so bad, to find that somebody cares for him. Now I think if you were to write for me, and tell them how I feel, master, they'd listen to you, and would allow me to go home again to rejoin my wife and boy. I'm different now, master, from what I was a year ago."

"In what are you different, Dick? You must tell me,

you know, if I am to tell your friends."

"Why, I want to leave off serving the devil. I've served him long enough, and served him well, too; but I've found him a hard master. Why, d'ye think if I'd served God as diligently as I've served the devil all these years, I'd be where I am now? No mistake, the devil deals out hard measure to his servants. But I see my folly now; and since I've seen that, I've grown to yearn for them at home. Why, my heart seems to hunger for them. Ye see, master, it's empty now, because I want to do better and be better, and it's like empty now. I can't rest till I go back to the old country and the old home, and see my wife and boy again."

"But does your reformation end there, Dick?"

Mr. Godfrey put the question before he thought, and felt almost startled at his own temerity as he did so, for he

had never made any decided Christian profession, and now it seemed like presumption to question anybody else, even though it were only poor lost Dick Fowler, as to his stand-

ing before God.

"No, master; it don't. I'm like that prodigal chap in something else. I've come back, and told God all about it, and I don't think He'll cast me off, if the rest do. It's all along o' your daughter's Bible readings. If it hadn't been for them, I'd have stayed as I was, for I'd clean forgot I had a soul at all. Bush-life isn't the best life as ever was; and we get as thoughtless as the sheep themselves, only a sight wickeder. But if nobody else got good by Miss Florence's work, I have. Only I don't care for everybody to know all about it, just yet."

"I am glad to hear what you say," replied Mr. Godfrey.
"I hope that you will go on learning more and more, and leaving your old ways behind. I'm glad you've found out that the devil's service don't pay; it never does. But God's

service pays well."

"And ye'll write for me, master?"

"Yes, indeed; I'll write to-morrow. I'll say all that you have told us this evening, and if you want anything else said just mention it to-morrow evening, before I close up the letter. Come to us again after dark, and I'll read you then all I have said; I only hope it may be successful in finding out your wife."

"Many thanks, master. I'll go to work to-morrow with a light heart. And never fear but that I'll come over in the evening. But I don't think I want any more said than I've told ye; only ye'll put it into proper words, please."

"All right; you may depend upon my doing that. Good

night;" and Dick was gone.

This was one of the first fruits of Florence's faith.

# CHAPTER XLL

#### MORE PROMISE OF FRUIT.

"We should fill the hours with our sweetest things
If we had but a day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
In our upward way;
We should waste no moments in weak regret
If the day were but one;
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun,
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work or to pray,
And to be what our Father would have us be,
If we had but a day."

Mary Love Dickinson,

THE fields wherein Florence worked were white unto harvest, but she scarcely realized it herself. She, and the other teachers plodded patiently on, hoping and expecting some reward in the future, but scarcely looking for immediate blessings. Like too many Sunday-school teachers of this day, they believed it possible that at some distant date success would crown their endeavours, but never dreamed of an instant and immediate reward. Such was not the expectation of the Apostles of old; such is not the expectation of those eminent heralds of salvation who are lifting up the Cross among us, and preaching a present salvation for sinful men. Had these labourers looked only for a future blessing upon their work, the world's history would be far different from what it is to-day. But Florence and her co-workers were to be taught a very needful lesson.

One Sunday, as the school exercises were going on, and both teachers and scholars were busily engaged on the lesson, a doubtful, hesitating kind of knock came to the door of the kitchen in which the school was held. Florence got up and went to the door, wondering all the while what was meant by the interruption. As she opened it she was

astonished at seeing no less a personage than Tom Higgins, but supposing that he required something or other in connection with his duties, said:

"What is it, Tom? What do you want?"

"I should very much like to come to your school, but I

don't like to ask you, miss."

The young fellow hung down his head and blushed as he preferred this request. He could not have looked more abashed had he been presenting a request to a princess of the blood-royal.

"But we have only young children here, Tom," replied

she. "I scarcely know what to say about it."

"But, Miss Florence, I'm ignorant, and want teaching as much as any of those little 'uns. If I'm a big feller, I expect I'm *more* ignorant than any one you've got here—expect I am, miss."

"But would you like to sit alongside younger children,

supposing I were to admit you?"

"Yes, indeed; wouldn't mind it one bit."

The truth being that the prospect of having such a big scholar almost frightened Florence. In her modesty and simplicity she shrunk from having Tom among the children. She felt, too, that Nellie and Lottie Sharp would not like it. So, reluctantly—for it cost her a great effort to turn the young man away—she said:

"I am very sorry, Tom; but I cannot accede to your request; the other teachers might not like it; and beside, our instructions are only fit for young children. You must

try to learn all that you can at our Bible-readings."

"So I do, Miss Florence," interrupted Tom; "but I want a great deal more teaching than that. I didn't care about all this, not so very long ago, but since that bite, ye know, I've been different. I'd be very thankful to be taught, for I know very little, and there's many questions I'd like to ask sometimes, but can't do it in meetin'."

"Well, I think I can help you by lending you some books, from time to time; and as you are a good reader, you will be able to help yourself in acquiring knowledge."

Tom looked disappointed and downcast. This reception was scarcely what he expected, and he was hungering and

thirsting so much for the Word of life. But what could be done? Florence had decided the question, and he must abide by it. So, slowly and sorrowfully he turned away, while Florence, with a regret for the youth, and a wish that his lot had been cast in the midst of greater privileges, rejoined her class. Had he only been able to attend one of those Bible-classes scattered on every hand in far-away England, the privilege would have been most gratefully embraced. But, out there, among the other hardships which he had brought upon himself, the lack of spiritual privileges was certainly not the least. And Tom had to bear it; though I believe that in consequence of being cast upon his own resources, he became more prayerful, more thoughtful and studious, and more determined to press on into the kingdom. It was nothing strange for Tom to take his little Testament away with him into the bush, and as he sat there watching the sheep or roaming about after the flocks, hour after hour, and day after day, to read and ponder the Word, of which, until Florence's ministrations, he had been well-nigh as ignorant as any benighted Kaffir. And He who sent the evangelist Philip to instruct the Ethiopian eunuch, as he read the Scriptures, sent into those lonely wilds that better teacher, the Holy Spirit, to instruct and enlighten poor ignorant Tom Higgins.

It was not long after this that Mr. Marsden lighted upon Tom as he sat perusing his Testament, while Watch, and Tiger, his two trusty sheep-dogs, lying at his feet, keeping their half-sleepy eyes on the flock browsing peacefully in the valley beneath, greeted his advent by a kind of subdued

growl.

"Well, Tom," said Mr. Marsden, "how are you getting on?"

"Middlin', sir, thank you," was Tom's reply, as he huddled the Testament into his pocket. "It's rare to see a stranger hereabout; sometimes I see nobody for whole days. The dogs and me have it all to ourselves."

"Well, and what do you do with yourself, when you are

so long alone?"

"Oh, I find it terrible lonely for the most part, but some how or other, those sheep always find us plenty to do. Ye

see, sir, it's no joke to keep eight hundred or a thousand sheep together. Why, if 'twasn't for the dogs a man could do nothing. They seem to take delight, sometimes, in roaming about."

"And how do you know when you've lost any? I sup-

pose you do sometimes lose sheep?"

"Oh, yes! The dingoes get in among the flock sometimes, and when they do, they make short work of them. But every now and then, when one of our mates comes up, we have a 'count.' We know then just how we stand. But then a sheep or two doesn't matter much—nor a score or two, if it comes to that. The master has too many to care for a straggling few that may get lost."

"Such is not the way of the Good Shepherd—Christ—Tom, said Mr. Marsden. He says, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.' He would know if one of His sheep were missing."

Tom pondered a minute.

"And of course He'd know anybody who wanted to be

among his sheep, wouldn't He?"

"Yes, certainly He would, Tom. Supposing, for instance, that you felt a desire to be numbered among His sheep, He'd notice that desire, and He'd show you the way."

Tom said nothing. He couldn't expose his new feelings to the gaze of daylight just then. He had a good bit of Nicodemus in his composition.

"Well, how do the people of Burntie Glen get on?"

"Pretty well, thanks. They are expecting you, I believe. I heard Miss Florence say something about it last Sunday at meetin'."

"Ah! And now I think of it, I heard that you had met

with an accident, Tom. Lost a finger, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir," and Tom held up his mutilated hand. It had been attended to by some who were skilled in bush surgery, and rough and ready though the methods of cure were, they had succeeded.

"How did it happen?"

Tom told Mr. Marsden all. When he heard it he rejoiced.

"Do you know what that reminds me of, Tom?"

"No, sir. How should I?"

"Well, this. 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. . . If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' You cut off that finger to save your life; it seemed to have been your only chance for life, and you did well. Suppose now you had some sin, some darling habit, which was as dear to you, which seemed as necessary to you, as your right hand or right eye—could you give it up for the sake of obtaining salvation?"

"Think I could. I guess, mister, I've thought a sight about these things lately—more than I ever fancied I

should once."

"Well, Tom, would you mind telling me your thoughts?"
"That don't seem easy, neither. But anyhow, I'm deter-

mined to lead a new life. I've got about tired of the devil's service, and if the Lord 'll allow me, I'll try to serve Him now."

"Bravo, Tom! You'll be bold for Christ one of these days! I expect we shall have you telling others how to be saved some day. Christ likes anybody who serves Him to do it with all their hearts. But what has made you think about it?"

But this was going to the core too much for Tom. Reticent and shy, as most real seekers are, he felt as if he could not unbosom himself to the missionary. And yet if he could have done it to anybody, he should have done it to Mr. Marsden. From him he would have gained help and direction. But how often is it the case that those who would counsel inquirers, have to grope as it were in the dark, simply because those whom they would help are too backward to give their feelings expression.

"Well, I may as well tell you what I think of doing at

Burntie Glen, Tom. I intend forming a church."

"A church, Mr. Marsden?"

Tom looked up with an expression of vague wonder on his face. I do not think he understood Mr. Marsden's meaning. "Yes, a church. There are enough of you now who love and fear God, to accomplish this."

"But—but, sir, I don't see where you are to build it. And it must be a long time before it would be finished."

"Oh, I don't mean the building! I mean the church as a body of believers. You see, wherever a company of Christians are banded into fellowship together, and desire to assist one another in serving the Lord, and in encouraging each other to live the Christian life, we call that a church. Buildings will come all in good time, but the society must be formed first."

"Do you think you'll have many in it?"

"I hope so. I think so, indeed, from the state of the people when I was last there. Miss Florence had done a good work in the sphere in which she was called to labour; and, I hope, Tom, we shall have you among us very soon."

"I don't like to make no promises, sir. You see if I was

to get wild again, people would mock at me."

"I don't think many people would, Tom. All whose opinion was worth caring for would be very sorry for you. Will you think over what I've been saying?"

Tom promised to do this, as most assuredly he would,

whether he promised or no.

"I must be going now, or I shall not reach Burntie Glen

by nightfall. Do you return home this evening?"

"No; I shall mate along with Ned Green to-night, at our little hut yonder. It's too far to go backward and forward every day; beside, we couldn't leave the sheep without some sort of protection. The dingoes would make fine have among them."

"Good-bye, then. Think on what I've said;" and so the

two parted.

# CHAPTER XLIL

## THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS.

"Christ sees,

Prophetic, the future harvest of the earth,
The promised great ingathering, and bids them look
On whitening fields; no grain shall perish, nor
One field be left unreaped, nor cluster left
To fall ungathered, when the great Lord of Harvest
Shall gather in his Pentecostal fruits.
Blessed is he who reaps, and blessed he
Who goeth forth, bearing the precious seel,
For both shall joy together in that day. — Miss Eliza Down.

THE station was early astir, and in so far as could be, the day was observed very much like a Sabbath. All but Ned Green, Mike Wellman, and a couple or three of the younger lads from the Mostyns and Willises, were excused from their usual labours on account of the religious services to be held that day. Mr. Marsden had found a soil prepared for his labours; as soon as he mentioned his intention of forming a society of Christian believers, his proposal was received joyfully and gratefully. More applications came to him than he had dreamed of, for it seemed as if, after being deprived of religious ordinances and privileges so long, the residents at Burntie Glen were determined to make a decided stand for the Lord. Evidently, the little spot would be a bright oasis in the midst of the darkness and almost heathen ignorance which generally characterized the squatters.

The services were inaugurated by an early morning prayer-meeting, held, of course, in Florence's school-room, which was also to be the abode of the little church, since, for the present, at least, no building would be erected. What the subsequent half dozen years might do for the station, it was impossible to tell. The "little one might become a thousand," and "the small one a strong city," even in temporal things. It might be that Burntie Glen would become a thriving town, or even a city—more unlikely

things had taken place than that—and with the advantages of wood and water possessed by the settlers, there was every

inducement for the investment of capital.

But the school-room was available—indeed it was scarcely ever used for any other purpose now; beside, Mr. Godfrey had cheerfully consented that until better accommodation could be procured, this room should be considered as the regular preaching station. There, as I said, the morning prayer-meeting was held, and a goodly number assembled—that is, considering the population. All the males and the young people were there, and although one used to cities might have contemptuously termed the assembly a "handful," yet it included quite three-fourths of the population. The prayers were short, hearty, and sincere, if somewhat noisy, and when the little company broke up, their spirits were attuned for the day.

But it was at the noon service that the chief business of the day was done. After a rousing sermon by Mr. Marsden, and singing some hymns, prayer was devoutly made for the little society. Then Mr. Marsden solemnly inquired of each member of the congregation if he, or she, desired to make a profession of love to Jesus. After going round in this way, he told all those whose minds were decided on the question to stand up. Several did so. These were Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey, Florence, Lottie and Nellie Sharp, Mr. Mostyn, and Dick Fowler. Seven of them, all pledged to follow the Saviour!

"And you really desire to profess your faith in Christ,

and to be united in a society for this purpose?"

With one accord they answered "Yes."

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"Then I shall form you into a class. Your class-leader will be brother Godfrey. I make no doubt but that he will strive to encourage and stimulate you in the Christian life. And see to it, that as a little band of avowed Christians, of professed followers of the Lord, you keep your lamps burning brightly. You are set for a light in a dark place. Your light cannot be hid unless you yourselves hide it, wilfully and sinfully. In that case your condemnation will be great, for according to the measure of grace which you have received, you will be expected to impart. Rest not

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until all within the reach of your influence are the Lord's. May God bless you and keep you ever. May you be guided and upheld all through your wilderness journey, until you meet in the Church triumphant above."

"Now," continued Mr. Marsden, "I desire those who wish to love the Lord, but are not yet assured of their

salvation, to stand up."

Some more stood up—Mrs. Mostyn, Mr. and Mrs. Willis, Paul Mostyn, and Sallie, Harry Godfrey, and Fred Sharp. Tom Higgins was there, looking wistfully on, but he did not move, though his conscience told him to do so.

"Any more?" questioned Mr. Marsden. "Are there any more willing this day to decide for Christ?" His eye sought Tom, but he would not mention his name, deeming it best that such a decision should be his own. But nobody else

stood up.

"Seven more of you anxious to find Christ, willing to decide for Him. I will also form you into a class, of which sister Florence Godfrey will be the leader. I am sure she will strive to her uttermost to lead you to the fountain head of truth, and direct you to the cross of Christ. You can only be saved by faith in Christ; and although you are but learners and babes now, He, I am sure, will lovingly regard you and receive you. I bid you God-speed in your class, and I trust that before long you will not merely be seekers, but finders of salvation."

"Please, sir, have me, too! I can't be left out. I can't come as a saint, but I'll come as a sinner. Oh, do have me too."

It was Tom Higgins' voice broken by emotion, and almost pleading in its earnestness. Mr. Marsden looked at him as if he had half expected the appeal.

"By all means, Tom. I welcome you into this class of inquirers with all my heart, and I doubt not but that many more feel like me. You are now, therefore, a member of the inquirer's class. And I think it will not be long before I shall have the happiness of receiving you all into full connexion. May God grant it."

The two classes were formed, all the names being entered in the leaders' books in due form. Then, after more exhortation and prayer the little assembly broke up, to meet

again in the evening.

All the company reassembled again, and even some babies were there, including the little ones who were lost but a short time before. There was no exclusiveness about the meeting—young and old, saint and sinner, were welcome. The only difference was that those who had been formed into the two classes of which I have told you, took the front seats according to Mr. Marsden's direction. It was interesting beyond measure to scan the faces of this little company. Few in point of numbers, there were representatives of almost every class there. Mr. Godfrey was the shrewd, careful man of business; Mr. Mostyn, the hardworking, grizzly, rough, but well-meaning man; Mrs. Godfrey, Mrs. Mostyn, and Mrs. Willis, were true "careful Marthas," with anxious, worn faces, and pale, thoughtful Florence, Nellie, and Lottie Sharp, were blooming specimens of young maidenhood, giving their early years to the Saviour, and seeking His blessing to crown their Harry Godfrey, Fred Sharp, and Paul Mostyn, were lads full of impulse and ardour, bowing at Jesus' shrine, and yielding their boyish reverence to Him. Poor Dick Fowler and Tom Higgins were the returning prodigals of the com-As they sat there in their untidy, ragged clothes, with troubled faces and downcast air, they exemplified the hardships and misery of a life of sin, for in this day of decision they could not forget the past. Dick Fowler was hoping and praying for a letter from England; and Tom Higgins was wondering if he should ever be able to go back again, to see his earthly friends—if they would receive him as tenderly and lovingly as his Heavenly One had done.

Very simple and homely were the appointments of that communion. A common white plate contained some pieces of bread, and a pint cup, some cold water. The bread and water were handed round to all those newly received into the society that day, and each partook of them with very mingled feelings. Then some singing, then prayer, then more singing, and, finally, each one who felt moved to do so, related his or her experience. Mr. Marsden led the way with an account of his conversion—away, back in his boy-

hood's days. He recounted the leadings of the Lord with him, how plainly and how kindly he had been led out to that colony, there to plant the standard of the Redeemer among the scattered families of that part of the world. outspoken warm-heartedness served to unloose the tongues of some of his hearers. As soon as he had finished, Mr. Mostyn stood up, awkwardly enough, it is true, but to all appearance thoroughly alive to the occasion. Straightening himself a bit, and looking round upon his hearers and companions, as if to be peak their for bearance, he said: "Dear friends,—I shouldn't have been here to-day, if it hadn't have been for the goodness of God—and that, I guess, a many of us can say; because if we'd got our deserts, we should have been sent to our own place, like Judas, afore this. Well, friends, I never dreamed that I should see a day like this in Burntie Glen-mind ye, I didn't care for to, neither; I was mighty thoughtless and hardened—I don't expect any of ye was worse. I think, when men come out here, they get careless and ignorant, as ignorant as the sheep they look after; at any rate, I know I was, until lately. I'd got to look upon this life as containing all that could concern us; for though we had an old copy of the Bible in our hut, I never thought of looking inside it. Well, ye know, friends, that Miss Florence set up teachin' us on Sunday afternoons in her Bible-readin's,—and it was a blessed thought of hers to do it. I don't hardly know how she could do it, though, seein' we were such a rough, bad lot, not one bit like herself, but she did. Well, I used to come here as often as it suited me, more for the sake of lookin' on, than for anything else; but, mind you, I heard a bit sometimes that would stick. It 'ud stick to me so tight, that I couldn't get rid of it; and when I was out quiet with the sheep, or smokin' my pipe, them words 'ud all come back agin. And so by degrees I got to find that my soul needed savin' as well as other people's, though I didn't say a word about it to nobody. And very often I'd offer up a prayer, when out in the bush, though I'd been ashamed for anybody to hear me do it. However, this went on, till my Tommy and Polly got lost. Ye remember how we searched and searched, till we most give 'em up for dead. Well, just as we got to the worst.

and I thinkin' I should never see 'em alive again, I axed the Lord to help us to find 'em. I promised Him, too, that if He'd let us find 'em all safe, I'd sarve Him—and I meant it, I did. Well, He give me my prayer; and I think He give me more than I axed Him, for He teached me to love Him, beside. So now, it's no trouble to sarve Him; and leastways, I mean to till I die, if He'll help me. Dear friends, I hope you'll all pray for me."

Mr. Mostyn's experience was a sample of the rest. The meeting lasted until far beyond the orthodox time at Burntie Glen, which was in fact measured by the sun, but when the little audience was dismissed, each one felt that he and she

had received a blessing.

# CHAPTER XLIIL

#### A LETTER TO A PRODIGAL,

THE event just narrated was a notable occurrence in the history of the station. As those who were present left the meeting their hearts were full, and for many days thereafter this constituted almost the sole topic of conversation. Those who had openly professed Christ, were regarded with curiosity and interest by the younger part of the little community; whilst those who intended to do it, were stimulated and encouraged in their good resolutions. I need not say that the Sunday-school felt some of the inflow of this new Whether they obtained consent or not, it was nothing strange to see the grown-up members of the station come into the school and take their seats by the side of the children, anxiously listening to the instruction given there, as if they could not hear sufficient in the Bible-readings to satisfy their longing. So sometimes it happened that after all, Tom Higgins had Florence for his teacher. She, as well as her co-workers, failed to appreciate the honour of having adult scholars, but nevertheless they went on sowing the seed here or there, as opportunity offered, knowing not "which should prosper, this or that." And it was not very long before Tom could rejoice in the full liberty of the children of God.

It was a very remarkable coincidence that about this time Tom should receive a letter from his father, but so it was. Tom had written home once previously; but he was so full of his newly found joy, that he was about to write a second letter to his friends, telling them of the wonderful change which had passed over him, when this one arrived. As I told you once before, Tom was a scapegrace, a ne'er-do-well, whom his friends had sent out to Australia to rough it among strangers, because they could do nothing with him But it was not to be supposed that they never thought of him; his parents remembered him, and sighed over him occasionally, if nobody else did, and, indeed, many a time they wished that he had been more steady in his conduct and inclinations. They missed him at home, whoever else did not; and spent anxious days and nights, sometimes wondering whether he were dead or alive.

For a long time, Tom had never written home at all; a feeling of shame, united to a hardened, dogged sort of anger, on account of his banishment from home, led him to bury himself, as it were, from all knowledge of his friends. since the dawn of religious instruction, and more especially since Tom had commenced to care about religion, he had remembered his home, and for a wonder had started a correspondence. You may be sure that Mrs. Higgins did not fail to answer; and even Mr. Higgins—who was a blacksmith and wheelwright, in the little country village from which Tom hailed,—although little used to writing, handled the pen in sincerest gladness of heart, as he replied to Tom's illspelt scribble. For the matter of that, neither Tom nor his father were very clever scribes; the one had grown too horny-handed at the anvil, and the other had almost forgotten what little education he had gained. But, anyhow, Tom had managed to convey to his parents the good news that he had turned over a new leaf, that he intended to be something different from the graceless, careless scamp he once was; and that, God helping him, he would yet try to bring out a fair and manly life. Not that he said just this in so many words, but this was the meaning and much more; so that, as his friends read, they rejoiced to know that the poor exiled fellow was at last returning to his senses and his duty.

Mr. and Mrs. Higgins began to think how good it would be to have their son at home, to be, perchance, the joy and comfort of their old age; so without much delay they wrote to this effect, and the letter reached Tom at this juncture

of time. It ran somewhat thus:

"Dear son Tom,—We are right glad to hear that you've at last seen the error of your ways, and resolved to turn It strikes us that you haven't had very over a new leaf. pleasant times out there always; but that's neither here nor But at any rate we should all have been a sight happier, if you had never gone away from us at all. But as Providence would have it, it has all turned out for the best, and our old hearts are made glad at last, to know that vou are a different lad. We thought you'd be brought right some time or other; though I must say we didn't depend upon God's promises so much as we might have done. now that you have really turned over a new leaf, and intend to lead a different life, it has struck your mother and myself, that you would like to come home again. And if you would, why, there's the old home open to you at once, and I say 'Come, and welcome.' All your brothers and sisters are married, and gone out in the world, and there's nobody at home but your mother and me. We feel lonely sometimes, especially when we remember you, son Tom, and we'd like to see you home again. I am still carrying on the old business, and you know pretty well what that is. It has brought you all up, and set you out in life, and now mother and I have almost enough to live on. Well, the long and the short of this is, that if you like to come home, and settle down, you shall have the business for your own. think that'll be a great deal better than your sticking out in Australia, serving other people. Your mother has quite set her heart upon it, so I hope you'll do it. And, son Tom, we should like you home as soon as you can come—the

sooner the better. And may God bless you always, and

make you a blessing."

To Tom this was a most precious epistle. He carried it in his pocket, read it, and re-read it, until the edges were all frayed, and the pages greasy and dirty with fingering. Then, because the envelope was worn out, he hid it in the lining of his hat, and this, as we may suppose, did not improve its condition.

# CHAPTER XLIV.

## THREE YEARS LATER.

WHEN people have plenty to do, they are apt to find that times flies fast. This was the case with Harry Connor, whose days were full of work and most of his evenings full of study. As his capacity for business increased, Mr. Stainforth found him employment commensurate with that capacity, while his after-office hours were busily employed in adding to his store of knowledge. Three years had passed by since that memorable evening when he had picked up Pierre Dupresne in the streets and invited him home. The little French lad had prospered amazingly since his residence with the Connors. Both physically and mentally he had prospered, while his spiritual instruction was provided for by regular attendance at a Sabbath-school. Harry Connor had been obliged to withdraw from the ragged school in which he had been teaching, on account of the distance he was compelled to travel; but he had sought out a Sabbathschool in its place, and attended the Bible-class punctually there. Every returning Sabbath saw the two trudging off to the school, where Pierre, at least, learnt that Protestants were not the wicked people which he had always imagined them to be. His intercourse with the Connors, and their kindness to him, had taught him the truth, that among "heretics" there were many good people; while had the priest who was his mother's spiritual guide in those faraway days of his early youth, but seen how diligently he searched and read his Bible, in order to prepare his Sundayschool lessons, he would have pronounced him very far gone in heretical principles. He had become quite a favourite with Mrs. Connor, while to Harry he supplied the place of younger brother. It would have been difficult for either of them to have given up Pierre now, and I am sure that Pierre himself would have broken his heart, had he been required to leave his adopted home, and go once more out, friendless and forlorn, to shift for himself.

But this was not all the good which had been accomplished by that act of kindness. While Pierre had benefited, Harry had studied, and to so much purpose, that he could now speak, write, and read French fairly well. Night after night he had applied himself to the task, and having mastered the rudiments of French grammar, had called in Pierre's aid, which was of great importance in translation and pronunciation. Pierre was a city-bred lad—his home having been in Paris—and on this account his French was fairly pure and good. He was a willing teacher and Harry an eager learner; it was not surprising, therefore, that he made such good progress.

And this progress formed a source of congratulation to himself, when, one day, Mr. Stainforth called him into his office for a few minutes' conference. It was not an uncommon thing for Harry to be closeted with his employer; very often of late he had been employed to conduct correspondence requiring care, tact, and secrecy. Harry obeyed the summons, thinking that some business of this kind awaited him. He found Mr. Stainforth in the midst of a heap of letters with a most puzzled expression of countenance. There was some difficulty to be got over, evidently.

there was some difficulty to be got over, evid

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir?"

"Yes, Connor, I did. The fact is, I wish to know if you are acquainted with French. Have you studied that language at all?"

"Yes, sir, for some time past. I can read and translate

French quite easily."

"But can you speak it?"

"Yes, sir, fairly well. I suppose I could sustain a conversation so as to make myself understood."

"How did you learn it? Who taught you?"

"I learnt the pronunciation from a native, sir. In addition to my studies I have had the assistance of a little French lad, so that I can converse quite as well as I can read."

"Indeed; you have been favourably situated, Connor."

Harry blushed. He knew, though he would not have told upon any account, that his mastery of French was the result of that long-gone kind action. Was it not like finding

his bread "upon the waters, after many days?"

"Well, the reason why I wished to know is this. I have great need of a trustworthy person just now to go to France. Some important affairs in Lyons require that somebody should be at once on the spot to act for the firm. I know that two or three, if not more, of the other clerks speak French very well, but I do not feel that I can trust them. Their habits and associates are not just what I would wish. Indeed, I require a sharp, thoughtful young fellow, who would look after my interests, take care of himself, and at the same time be able to deal justly with our French correspondents. Affairs have got into a muddle over there, but I really cannot see my way clear to go, myself. Under the circumstances I am glad to learn that you are acquainted with French, for I feel as if I could trust you to accomplish the business in hand."

Harry scarcely knew what to say. He felt as if the room were turning topsy-turvy, and carrying him with it. To find himself preferred before others and put into places of trust, implied so much that was flattering to him, that he felt quite overwhelmed.

"You don't speak. What do you think of it?"

"Why, sir, if you will only trust me—as you kindly say you can—I will try to the very extent of my ability to serve you; I feel so touched by your unexpected preference for me, that I should be a base fellow, indeed, if I were to betray your trust by any carelessness of mine."

"Very well, then, I will consider it settled. Now we

will go into the particulars of this business, and after that, you had better go home, and prepare to start at once. If all goes well, you will be back again in a fortnight, safe and sound."

Two hours later, when Harry went home unexpectedly, and informed his mother of the turn which his affairs had taken, you would have thought that the fortnight's trip to France meant a voyage to New Zealand and back. She, with the fear which is born of ignorance of the world, felt as if her son were going among foreigners and barbarians, where life and limb would be alike risked. Her Harry was as the apple of her eye; had any evil happened to him, she would quickly have gone down with sorrow to the grave; and the bare thought of his going into a strange country among strangers, filled her mind with all kinds of appre-I think she would have willingly sacrificed all Harry's prospects of advancement in the office, for Mr. Stainforth coupled an increase of salary with his commission, could she but have kept him at home under her maternal eye.

But this was not to be. Harry met all her objections as kindly and seriously as he knew how, and after a little bit of talk with Pierre, in which he charged him to be good to Mrs. Connor, and fill the place of a son to her, he prepared for his journey. Mr. Stainforth had expressed a wish that he would start that afternoon, and in accordance with that wish he found himself speeding along at express rate toward London, ere the sun had set. If all went well, he would be

on French soil to-morrow.

Harry got to Lyons safely and quickly, and plunged at once into the business which Mr. Stainforth required him to do. Head and hands were busily occupied for some days, and the matter taxed Harry's capabilities to the utmost. He was only a young man, not much experienced in this kind of thing, and the wisdom of twenty years or so, is not much. It seemed a wonder that Mr. Stainforth had chosen so young a deputy to do his work. The Lyons people thought so too; but they found that Harry was not behind any of them in shrewdness and intelligence, and very soon learnt to treat him accordingly. His private studies had done this for

him; they had disciplined and informed his mind, rendering him qualified to take a position among educated people. These attainments, in addition to his business knowledge, fitted him to hold his own, even in this French negotiation, and to give satisfaction to Mr. Stainforth. Some young people at twenty have as much sound knowledge and common sense as others have at thirty, and Harry, it seemed, was one of these.

But the affair tried his patience and worried his mind. He felt very glad when Saturday night came and business was at an end for that week. He wrote letters home both to Mr. Stainforth and his mother, and went for a quiet walk in the city, preparatory to taking the rest he so much needed.

Sunday dawned—the one day which Harry thought and hoped would be like a familiar friend to him in that strange city. He had been used to Sunday in the city all his life, but he soon found that Manchester, and Lyons were two very different places. A continental Sunday is not just an Englishmen's ideal of that blessed day, and we hope it never Harry noted with surprise and concern the large numbers of people who were following their everyday avocations, and the hundreds of shops which stood open for Only women and children, as a rule, beside priests, were going toward the churches for prayer. Harry walked in among them, finding a church-door open, and gained a seat in some distant corner. He listened attentively, but for any good which he derived from the service, he might just as well have stayed at home. Much he wondered if there were any Protestant church or chapel to be found in Lyons, and resolved to ask at dinner-time of the landlord of the hotel at which he was domiciled. Could he but discover such a place of worship it would seem a little like home.

Much to his surprise and satisfaction, the landlord deputed a man-servant to escort him to an evangelical chapel, in the afternoon, telling him at the same time that he would willingly have done this kindness for him in the morning had he only mentioned his request. Harry followed his guide for some three quarters of an hour or so, up one street and down another, in and out of dingy courts, "cutting corners," as we should say, by taking shorter routes, until the two arrived in front of a little unpretentious building, over the door of which was the inscription, "Chapelle Evangelique." His guide turned round and said, as he held out his hand for the franc which Harry gave him, "Voila, Monsieur! la chapelle."

Harry advanced to the door, which stood open, after the invariable custom on the Continent, and peered inside. He could hear nothing of any service, but evidently this was the home of some Protestant community, and he supposed that service would commence before long. So, going quietly into the chapel, he sat down on one of the scats.

# CHAPTER XLV.

#### A FRENCH SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

'One by one we come to Jesus,
As we heed His gentle voice;
One by one His vineyard enter,
There to labour and rejoice.
One by one sweet flowers we gather,
In the glorious work of love—
Garlands for the blessed Saviour,
Gather for the realms above.
One by one, with sins forgiven,
May we stand upon the shore,
Waiting till the blessed Spirit
Takes our hand, and guides us o'er."

THE chapel was rather large and well built. There was room enough for at least a hundred children, had they chosen to come; but to all appearance the Sunday-school was not a flourishing institution there. As Harry looked round, he saw no signs of life, and for a long time heard no sound. By-and-by, however, he fancied that he could detect a dull indistinct sort of muttering, away up in one

corner of the gallery, and, obeying the impulse of the moment, made his way thither.

The sound of his footsteps aroused whoever was up there, for as he threaded his way among the pews, a black head popped up from out the far corner, followed, in a few seconds, by a couple of smaller heads. These belonged to a young man and two boys, who constituted the entire Sunday-school at the "Chapelle Evangelique." The appearance of a stranger—and an English stranger—afforded much matter for surprise to the trio.

"Excuse me," said Harry, speaking in French, "I did not wish to intrude, but came here looking for the Sundayschool. I presume I am come at the wrong hour?"

"No, you are not. This is the Sunday-school."

Of course the teacher spoke his native language likewise.

"But where is the school? I cannot see any classes at work."

"This is the school," and the young man waved his hand toward his two lone scholars.

"What! Pardon my inquisitiveness, but I should like much to know if these two lads form the school."

" Oui, monsieur."

"Are there any other classes?"

"Non, monsieur."

"Nor superintendents, nor officers?"

"Non, monsieur."

Harry looked his surprise; whereupon the young man, with the politeness peculiar to his people, proceeded to explain that the school had only been started some little time before, and that in consequence of the influence of the priests, it was difficult to obtain scholars. They had, it seemed, threatened to excommunicate anybody who sent their children to this Protestant school, and this threat had operated very powerfully upon the minds of the poorer part of the inhabitants. These two lads, however, belonging to the more cultivated portion of the population, had attended for some time regularly, and it was hoped that their example would influence others. The teacher added that he himself disregarded the priests and their threats, and that for years he had been a Protestant.

Still it seemed such a strange thing to Harry, accustomed as he was to large schools and rooms overflowing with scholars. This diminutive specimen of a French Protestant Sunday-school contrasted curiously with that which he attended in Manchester, the register of which bore the names of a thousand children.

But stay; was not the "kingdom of heaven" likened to "a grain of mustard seed?" and the "leaven in a measure of meal?" Did not Christ himself tell us that His kingdom should have small beginnings upon earth? Harry recalled this, and checked the feeling of wonder which rose unbidden in his breast. Who was he, that he should look down with contempt upon this feeble effort for God and truth? So, begging to be considered as one of themselves —inasmuch as he belonged to an English Sunday-school he took the seat which monsieur courteously offered him, and joined them in the lesson. As he read his portions of the lesson from the little French pocket-Bible, he felt thankful and proud that he was thus able to mingle with those who loved Christ, and spoke of Him, in a strange land. And this was the result of his kindness to poor Pierre.

The afternoon wore away before Harry dreamt of it. was such a treat to him to hear the truths of the Gospel expounded by this lively, energetic, intellectual, little French-He seemed to take different standpoints from those which an English teacher would have taken; and perhaps this was because he had been destined in his early youth for the priesthood, had undergone part of the training necessary, having received into his heart Protestant teaching, had forsaken the calling for which he was intended. Some amount of persecution, too, he had endured, but having been quite a young lad at the time that he had chosen another profession, his defection had not occasioned so much rancorous feeling among his associates then, as it would have done had he been but a few years older. Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke; and when he requested his visitor to say something to the lads, Harry felt that there was really little more to be said. But it cheered the French teacher to see an English brother in the faith, and to know that though of different nationalities, they were one in "Christ Jesus."

\* \* \* \* \* \*

But we must take a look at our Australian friends. These three years had completely changed the appearance of things at Burntie Glen-or Glentown, for that was the new name of the place. It had risen from its low estate, and in place of being a mere grazing station, had become a decent little town, containing a store, a smithy, a post-office, and a fair-sized iron chapel. Adam Thomson, the storekeeper, was purveyor-general to the little community, while Seth Brown, the blacksmith, was carpenter and builder into the bargain. Mr. Marsden had taken up his abode at Glentown as the chief place of his circuit, and was the minister of the little chapel. Still continuing his ministrations to the people of the district, he vet considered the little church at Glentown his own special care. A score or two of wooden houses held as many families—chiefly those of new emigrants—while Mr. Godfrey's increasing flocks and herds gave employment to at least half of them. Under these circumstances, you will not be surprised to hear that the Sunday-school had increased also in numbers; indeed, the attendance then averaged fully three times the number of its early days. On this account, partly, the school had migrated to the new building, where, if you had paid a visit, you would have found ten or a dozen classes working diligently every Sabbath, under as many teachers. A bush Sunday-school it still was, it is true—destitute of many appliances which English Sunday-schools enjoy; but still a prosperous one, as far as spiritual results were concerned. It had proved itself a real "nursery for the church" at Glentown; so that in place of the two classes which Mr. Marsden had formed on the establishment of the little society, there were members and candidates for membership sufficient to fill four classes. Adam Thomson, an intelligent Scotchman, led the third of those classes, and Seth Brown, a real old-fashioned Cornish Methodist, took charge of the Composed of a number of people with warm hearts, and possessing the zeal of their "first love," this backwoods

church might have furnished a pattern to many of our sleepily respectable English churches. They were united, because they had no other common ground upon which to meet, and the gregarious instinct which prevails so largely in humanity. prompted them all to appear at chapel as surely as the Sabbath came round. The mere excitement and pleasure of seeing each other, and being seen, afforded no common enjoyment, while, to many of them, these holy gatherings, brought back the memories of their long-gone English Sundays, and they felt less intensely for the time that they were strangers and pilgrims. On a Sunday morning the little community was early astir, and the one little bell-which Mr. Godfrey had obtained from Melbourne—perched up in the spire, struck out a cheerful "ding-dong" note, which seemed to put a great gulf between the life of the Sabbath and that of yesterday. All in that little community went to the chapel, even down to the babies and dogs. Anybody but a backwoods missionary would have been nervous at the infantile interruptions, and a ritualistic dandy would have considered the presence of the sheep-dogs a pollution. so Mr. Marsden. It did his earnest soul good to see the rough drovers and shepherds come in with hats in hand, followed by their faithful dogs, they finding resting-places underneath the benches whereon their masters sat, and paying a dignified sort of attention—although varied now and then by a bark, if the singing was unusually loud—which would have afforded a rebuke to many an English Sunday-And so far as the mothers were concerned, if they had not brought their babies, they must have stayed at home.

As for the fashions, nobody, I think, who reads these lines would have felt at all desirous of copying them. Most of them dated from the time when the residents of Glentown left the old country, while the cut of many a coat, and mantle, and dress, was even older than that. And the admixture of colours in the outfits of some of the young ladies would have astonished a cultivated eye. As far as their standard of fashion went, anybody who could sport the seven prismatic colours at one time, seemed to have obtained perfection in the art of dress. A city belle would have

giggled, and an artist's sense of beauty would have been outraged, at the monstrous absurdities in style and colour, perpetrated by the unconscious residents at Glentown. But as, according to Thomas Carlyle, the clothes should be forgotten in our estimate of the soul, I am bound to inform you that there were some very noble souls among the little community. Simple, hospitable, prayerful, believing, honest, and laborious; they might well have read a lesson to many a congregation surrounded by higher privileges. In these matters they were more worthy of respect than satire.

You will wish to know whether Florence was married at this time. She was not; but the wedding-day was fixed, and before another three months, she intended to bid Australia farewell. Mark Lisburne had waited all this time very impatiently for her, but Florence could not see her way clear to leave the little society and school quite as soon as he wished. She knew that once married and settled in Manchester, she would not be likely to visit Glentown again, and her heart yearned to see the school for which she had laboured, and planned, and prayed, established on a sound Besides this, she naturally shrunk from leaving all her kindred, and going into a home, which, however happy and sweet, would be far from those she loved and prized. Further, Alfred was about to leave the sea and return home, and Florence wished to see him before her marriage. One thing after another had delayed his return, however; but if all went well, Alfred would arrive at Melbourne at about the same time that Mr. Lisburne landed. more than probable that they would journey together towards Glentown, and so the reunion would be complete. An old friend would also be there, for in his last letter Alfred had told them that it was Charlie Capern's intention to seek for leave of absence so as to be present at the wedding. I should have told you before that Charlie and Nellie Sharp had maintained a correspondence ever since the young mate's first visit; and, as you know, such correspondences usually end in something more serious.

# CHAPTER XLVL

### DR. LOCKWOOD'S ILLNESS.

"No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of Thy Son.

The best obedience of my lands
Dares not appear before Thy throne;
But faith can answer Thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done."—Watts.

According to the old well-known adage, "the young may die, but the old must."

You do not forget Dr. Lockwood—Mr. Lisburne's uncle. Implacable and unforgiving enough he had proved himself, with regard to Mark, during these years; but somehow or other, when mortal illness takes hold of a man, his implacability and anger are very apt to melt away before the dawn of eternity. I suppose it was so in Dr. Lockwood's case. Sure I am that nothing else would have prompted him to send a message to his nephew,—his long-banished nephew.

The message, brusque, terse, plain, ran somewhat thus:—
"If Mr. Lisburne would see Dr. Lockwood before the latter dies, he must come at once." This message revealed the man. He wanted to see Mark—craved to see him; but still

he could not bring his mind to invite him.

Bare permission to see him was accorded—that was all; but for even this small boon Mark was thankful. It was something for a harsh, overbearing, tyrannical man even to *indicate* a wish for reconciliation; accustomed as he had been for years to rule all within his sphere, most arbitrarily, he must have descended from his pinnacle of dignified pride, or he would never have caused such a message to be sent to Mark. Mark took it, read it, thought over it a little, then finally put on his hat, and sought his uncle's house.

"How is my uncle this morning, Taylor?" he said to the footman who admitted him.

"Worse and worse, sir. He can't last much longer."

"Does he expect me?"

"I think he does, sir. He's been a-fretting himself for days about you, Mr. Lisburne—thinking he should like to see you; but it seemed as if he couldn't make up his mind to see you. That awful pride of his stood in the way—it did. But when I heard the nurse say as how he'd sent for you, I put it down at once in my own mind that he wasn't long for this world. Death will frighten a many people, you know, sir, into doing things that they wouldn't when they are in good health."

While this delivery of Taylor's opinions was going on, Mark was softly following him as he led the way to the door of the sick-room. Arrived there, permission to enter soon came from the sick man's nurse, and in another min-

ute Mark was standing by his uncle's bed.

What a contrast there was in the appearances of the two! One, old, wan, worn, and exhausted—the other, strong, healthy, young, and full of life; one, nearing the end of his days and hours—the other, in the very midst of the battle of life, full of enthusiasm and energy. All the pleasant promise of life had died out for the one; but for the other, hope shed around her most cheering rays. Something like this must have passed through the mind of Dr. Lockwood as he looked up at his nephew, for his first words were, "Ah! I wish I were in your place."

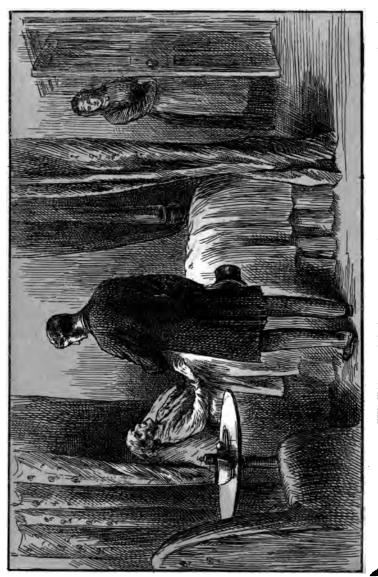
"Why, uncle?" said Mark, gently, wondering if Dr. Lockwood had really recognized him. "Why do you wish you

were me?"

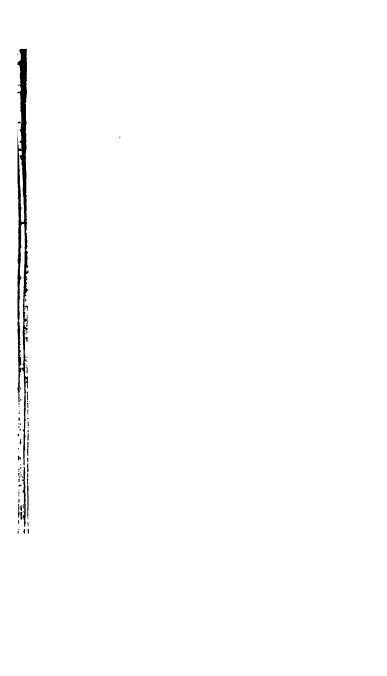
"Because I've got to go away, and leave all behind. You, you have got life all before you. That is why I wish I were you, Mark."

"But you can have the prospect of everlasting life before you. This life of ours is nought compared to that, uncle."

"Ay, but it isn't light before me. I don't seem to know exactly where I am going. And yet it will be all right, I hope. I've attended church regularly, I've rendered to everybody their dues, I've performed my religious duties



THE WORLD RECEDES-MR. LOCKWOOD'S REPENTANCE.



punctually, and what more could I do? But I wanted to see you, Mark, before I died, and I'm glad you've come so soon."

"I feared you were very ill, uncle, so I came as soon as

I received your message."

"Yes, I am very ill. I haven't been in practice all these years without being able to read my own symptoms. I know what is coming, better than my doctor likes to tell me. My own medical knowledge prepares me for the result."

"I am very glad, uncle, that you have not passed away without our meeting again. I would rather we were friends

again."

"So would I, Mark. And nothing but my pride has kept me from being reconciled to you all this time. People would tell me of your success with difficult cases at the infirmary, and I felt proud to hear it, for were you not a pupil of mine? But I sorely missed you when you left—yes, I did."

"You gave me no alternative, uncle," said Mark quietly. "I was forced to leave you, if I would retain my own liberty

of conscience."

"That is true; and now, I freely admit that I was to blame. I had no business to attempt to coerce you, none whatever.

"There is another thing I should like to speak about. Mark, you remember that I threatened to disinherit you. Well, I did. I destroyed the will which was in your favour, and executed another, leaving very much of my property to charities. That very infirmary which has gained your services since our breach, is remembered there."

Dr. Lockwood seemed to pause for an answer, but none

came. Mark scarcely knew what to say, either way.

"Well, I can't die easy and know that you, my only nephew, are left penniless. True, I've remembered your mother, as she'll find; but there's not as yet a penny for you. I tell you what I'll do; I'll appoint you residuary legatee. You will have a fair share that way."

"Thank you, very much, uncle; but why need you trouble yourself about me? I shall never starve. And as a medical man, I should pronounce this agitation to be bad for you."

"Nonsense, Mark. It quiets me. It has preyed upon my mind for so long, that the bare fact of discussing the matter with you, and arranging it more justly, takes away a load of anxiety. I could die easy, if I could only make amends to you for my unkindness. Why, when you've sent messages requesting to see me, and I've refused, I have done it with the heartache, because, after all, I wanted to see you. But, as I told you just now, the pride in my heart kept me from seeing you, and so making a tacit admission of my fault. But a death-bed is no place for pride or angry feeling."

No, it is not. Mark felt that; and as he looked upon the face of the old man, and noted how swiftly the gray hue, which betokens approaching dissolution, was creeping over it, his heart yearned to know just how the old man regarded

death.

"You were talking just now of your religious duties," he said. "Don't think me inquisitive, or inspired by a vain curiosity, but I feel anxious to know if your conscience is at peace through Christ, in the view of death. Would you

mind telling me your feelings, and your hopes?"

"Well, Mark," and the old man turned round, startled by the earnest tones in which his nephew spoke, "I don't seem to have any clear prospect at all. Of course, I hope for God's mercy; and I'm no worse than other people. We must all stand on our own bottom when we get into dying circumstances, I suppose; but I am not by any means sure as to my future. I've tried to do my duty in the position in which I've been placed; I've not wronged anybody—except you—and that will be all put right now; and I've attended to all the ordinances of the church; so of course I must be safe."

"But, uncle, let me press it home to you, for it is a solemn season with you. On what do you rest your hopes of heaven? You hope to go there—expect to go there—but on what do

these hopes and expectations rest?"

"Well, I was made a member of Christ's church, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, in my baptism. I was confirmed when I came of proper age; and since that time, I have taken the sacrament of the Lord's supper regularly. What more could I do?"

What a fearful parallel Dr. Lockwood's words presented to those uttered by our Lord: "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you I know you not, whence ye are; depart from Me, ye workers of interior."

iniquity.'

"Repent truly of all sin, and believe in Christ Jesus, as your Saviour, uncle. Have you done this? In spite of all your duties, notwithstanding your adherence to the forms and ordinances of religion, if you have not come to Jesus as a repentant sinner, and trusted to Him alone for salvation, you will never gain heaven."

"Eh! do you mean to say that I'm not right for heaven? Speak plainly, Mark; is it true that I'm not resting on a

secure foundation?"

"It is. 'There is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved'—no other name. If you are not resting on Christ, and what He has done for you, you cannot be saved."

The old man cast a long, serious glance at Mark's earnest face, and then cried, "Why! if you are right, I've been wrong from the beginning! I must begin all the work over

again! What am I to do?"

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Dr. Lockwood had need to learn again "the first principles" of religion.

"Do you mean to say, Mark, that all I have done counts

for nothing?"

"Nothing at all, uncle, and less than nothing, if that could be. Your righteousness, in God's sight is only as 'filthy rags.' You must be content to resign all hopes founded upon that, and accept salvation only as an act of pure mercy, accorded you by God, upon your believing in Christ's work for you, and trusting your soul upon His perfect righteousness. No matter how many religious duties you may have fulfilled; you are in God's sight a lost sinner. But Christ Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. If you know nothing of this, uncle it is no wonder that you do not feel

certain about your future. That future must be dark and uncertain, which depends upon our own doings."

"Then I have been as bad as a heathen all my life," wailed the dying man. "Oh! why, why were my eyes so

blinded? Why did I not know this before?"

"It is not too late to know it now, uncle," said Mark soothingly. "And for your encouragement it is written, 'He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' It doesn't matter that you've made a mistake all the way through; God will accept, pardon, and bless you. Even now, you may look and be saved."

"I will—I must. What! rest my eternal happiness upon what I can do? And that is what I have been doing all

these years. Oh! what a fool I have been!

"Leave me now for an hour or two, Mark; and on your way to the infirmary call at my lawyer's and request him to come at once, as I wish to add a codicil to my will. I must set you right before I shall have any peace of mind. Perhaps I turned a blessing from the house, when I turned you out. You do forgive me, don't you, Mark?"

"Don't say anything more about it, uncle, please don't. As far as any forgiveness on my part is required, you have it most fully. But I want to know that you can rejoice in prospect of heaven through your faith in Christ; that is the chief thing."

Mark left him for a few hours. The lawyer hurried up to the room of the dying man, for there was little time to lose. Truly he had his life's work to do at the last hour.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### DR. LOCKWOOD'S DEATH.

THE lawyer lost no time in attending to the summons, and within the space of an hour was writing, at Dr. Lockwood's dictation, the codicil which made Mark Lisburne residuary And, considering that after the specified legacies legatee. had been paid, there would remain a sum of about six thousand pounds, it could not be said that Mark had suffered in any way by his adherence to principle. Indeed, taking into account the fickle-mindedness and the despotic tyranny which Dr. Lockwood occasionally displayed to all who came within the range of his influence, it was questionable whether Mark would have done so well had he remained an inmate of his uncle's house. At anyrate, Mark had the satisfaction of knowing that his conscientious performance of duty had not materially injured him—rather it had raised him in his uncle's estimation, and had added great weight to the counsels which he had given his dying relative.

"Is it all right, Ducie?" said Dr. Lockwood, as the lawyer presented the document for his signature. "You are sure it's all right. Read it to me once more; I want to be certain that I've made it up with Mark; for he's a good fellow, after

all."

"I will read it to you, sir, again," replied Mr. Ducie, who saw, though he forebore to say, that the old man's mental powers were failing, and he read the added clause.

"Yes, yes, that is what I mean. Now call in somebody else—the nurse will do—and I will sign it. You and she

will append your names as witnesses."

"Of course we will, Dr. Lockwood, and as quickly as possible," returned Mr. Ducie. "This excitement is not good for you just now, I fancy," and he rang for Mrs. Hatton.

"You are mistaken, Ducie," returned Dr. Lockwood.
"Nothing quiets a burdened conscience so much as dis-

charging a neglected duty; and that is what I've done at last, thank God. Now, then, I must put my name there, I suppose?"

"Just a little to the right of that position," returned Mr. Ducie, for his client's sight was growing dim, and he could scarcely distinguish the written lines from the blank spaces.

"Shall I guide your hand, sir?"

"No, no; I can do it all right. Now look at me, Ducie, and you, nurse Hatton. I don't want my boy to be cheated out of his property by any omission on our parts. And I call you to bear witness that I consider Mark Lisburne to be a noble, honest fellow, worthy of all and more than all I can do for him."

The two witnesses watched intently while the old man signed the codicil, and then appended their signatures. Within ten minutes more the matter was settled, and Mark was left residuary legatee. The strong feeling which had kept Dr. Lockwood up to the point during this ordeal—for it was such to him—now began to flag, and the deathly pallor which crept over his countenance told very truly of the reaction which had set in.

"Would you like to see your clergyman again, sir?"

asked the nurse.

"No, thank you, nurse. If I see anybody at all it will be Mark, my nephew. But you may read me something from the Testament, if you will."

"Any particular portion, sir?"

"Yes. I should prefer the third chapter of St. John's gospel. And when you have read it, leave me for a little

while alone, as I wish to be quiet, and to think."

She read it, and the old man listened as if it had been a passage out of a new Bible. The wonderful meaning of the salvation so freely and fully proclaimed by Christ, had never dawned upon his mind before. He had suffered himself to be beclouded hitherto by the mists and shadows of formality, religious ceremony, and false teaching. Now, the presence of death was stripping all meretricious disguises from his soul, and he recognized himself to be what he truly was in the sight of God—an unsaved sinner.

He repeated these words, "Whosoever believeth upon Him,

shall not perish, but have everlasting life," several times over after the reader, dwelling upon them as if his soul would fain cling to them as a last hope. And to what better hope could he cling?

I cannot tell you what passed between his soul and God during that period of solitude. Those of my readers who have ever lain at death's door, waiting for the solemn summons—which, however, in God's good providence, was withheld for that time—will be able to enter somewhat into Dr. Lockwood's feelings.

By-and-by Mark came in, and the first person whom he encountered was his mother. On receiving the news of the change in her brother's condition for the worse, Mrs. Lisburne came at once to Manchester, but as, according to Dr. Lockwood's directions to the nurse, he wished to be alone, she had not yet seen him.

"I had no idea of seeing you here, mother," said Mark, after the first salutations had been exchanged. "When did you hear that Uncle Lockwood was worse?"

"Yesterday. I got just a line intimating that his condition was dangerous, so, without delay, I came on this morning. Are you on friendly terms with your uncle?"

"Yes, mother; although our reconciliation has not been of long duration. Only this morning I received a message, stating that if I desired to see him, I must come at once. So I came at once, and saw him, and made everything right. As far as I was concerned, I would have been on friendly terms with Uncle Lockwood during all this time, but he has continually refused my overtures of friendship."

"And what is your private opinion of your uncle?"

"Speaking according to my medical knowledge, I should say that his hours are numbered. The disease has made overwhelming headway, and he is old. When I left him, some three hours ago, he expressed a wish to be alone for some time, but requested me to call again. So you have not seen him, I suppose, mother?"

"Not yet, Mark. The nurse told me that it was his desire to be left alone for a little time, and that she was not to enter until he rang for her. Hark! is that the bell?"

"I believe it is. I will give place to you, mother. We

had better go in to his room one at a time; but you go first. Let the nurse announce you, so that your appearance may not shock him."

Mrs. Lisburne passed about half an hour at her brother's bedside, and then came down-stairs again. Mark was sitting awaiting her return.

"What is your opinion of uncle, mother, now that you

have seen him?"

"I fear he is not long for this world. Go up, now, Mark;

he wishes to see you."

Mark went up. At the first glance he saw how changed his uncle was since his first interview with him. The eyes had grown more dim, the face more gray, and the lineaments more deathlike, in that short space of time. As Mark went in, Dr. Lockwood looked up with that appealing, eager look so often to be seen upon the faces of those, who, when going into eternity, look wistfully back to the friends and associations of this life. It is a kind of mute, voiceless appeal for the help which can never come from man. The young man went over to the side of the bed, and leant down.

"How do you feel now, uncle?"

"Worse. Nearer my end. Mark, a man should keep this hour always in his mind, if he would die comfortably. All the events of my past life seem to stand out before my mind's eye like the figures of a hieroglyphic. The record is clear and endless. Is it not wonderful that the approach of death should quicken the mind in this manner? Things which I had deemed forgotten and buried, now start up again—my conscience, the meanwhile, accusing or excusing me."

"But does the blood of Jesus speak nothing, while your conscience thus accuses you? Can you find no refuge there?"

"I hope I am beginning to do so. The nurse read me a little from the third chapter of John at my request just now; and I think I see a little of the plan of salvation. It is only through Christ and His death, that I can be forgiven;—do I understand it aright, Mark?"

"Perfectly, uncle. Now, you must cast yourself wholly upon Christ. Your faith must not be a work of the head,

but of the heart. Do you feel that you can trust Christ wholly?

"'Venture on Him, venture wholly, Let no other trust intrude; None but Jesus, none but Jesus, Can do helpless sinners good.'"

"I think I can, Mark; I am trying to. Yes, I will—I do. I must do it, nobody else can save me. Why, oh why, did I not understand this before?"

"Never mind now, uncle," suggested Mark. "Don't fret about what is past. You have to do with the present hour. Rest your soul's salvation upon Christ's work for you, and

you will be safe."

"But, Mark, this is coming at the eleventh hour. Does it not seem mean, after all the rest of my life has been spent otherwise, to expect to be received and owned by God as His child now?"

"You forget the thief on the cross, uncle. And beside that, you sinned in *mistaking* the way of salvation. You did not sinfully *reject* salvation; but according to your light you strove to enter it. And so far as you knew, you had entered it. God made provision under the old Mosaic law for sins of ignorance; and there is infinitely more virtue in the blood of Christ to atone for your sins of ignorance."

Yes, yes; all this is true. Still it is cheerless work to contemplate anyone going into eternity, with whom minutes have to do the work of days, and who feel that they have no secure footing on the Rock of Ages. Why do people leave the question of their eternal safety to be decided in a

dying hour, when all is flurry and alarm?

"We will pray, uncle," said Mark gently.
"Yes, do, my boy. And there's a Prayer-book, if you

require it."

"I don't need one, uncle," and Mark went on his knees. His prayer was short, simple, earnest; he spoke such words of fervent pleading to God, for the eternal life of his dying relative, that it seemed as if he would obtain the blessing. I think Dr. Lockwood gained more insight into the spiritual

relationship existing between God and a redeemed soul, from that prayer than he had ever gained before. When his nephew got up, he said, "Mark, I think it has come—the sense of pardon, I mean. I never dreamt that one could talk to God in that manner, before; He seems to be wonderfully near."

"Is he not 'Our Father,' uncle?"

"Aye! but I see a new meaning in it now. Yes, I think I can say that He is my Father. But why have I disliked you, and your fellow-Christians all these years? In heaven, we must be all one, whether Churchmen, or Dissenters."

"All one in Christ, uncle," said Mark.

"Mind you, Mark, for many years I have wanted to be right in the sight of God, and have supposed that I was, because I had complied with all the requirements of my Church. But I have found out, thank God, before it is too late, that I was building on a sandy foundation. Now, I test only on Christ—only on Christ. Thank God, Mark,

that you said what you did to me this morning."

Dr. Lockwood did not die that day, nor the next. His strength of constitution prolonged the struggle between life and death, and caused him to linger long in the border-land. But there was a good hope that when he finally passed away, he did so resting on the Saviour, who alone could make his peace with God. As Mark looked on the calm, white face, and marked the placidity which death had shed upon it, he felt thankful—intensely thankful—that he had summoned up his Christian courage, and spoken of Christ to the dying man. How would it have been had he not done so?

# CHAPTER XLVIIL

#### DARKEY SIMPSON ONCE MORE,

MEANWHILE, Mr. Marsden was assiduously pursuing his duties at Glentown—teaching, preaching, and making evangelistic tours in the surrounding districts. As I have told you before, these tours demanded of him long, lonely journeys through the scrub and forests, and across mountains and rivers; but as he had been accustomed to these experiences for some years, he thought little of them now, although at first they had proved his greatest difficulties. It was during a tour in the Pine Lake district, that he once again fell in with his old acquaintance, Darkey Simpson.

He had just collected some brushwood together, after hobbling his horse for the night, and was about to kindle a fire, when a wild, rough-looking man suddenly made his appearance from behind a clump of trees. Possessed of a most unprepossessing appearance, owning garments literally in rags, with long, lean face, wild, neglected hair and beard, and carrying pistol and knife in his belt, the apparition was a very unwelcome one to Mr. Marsden. Still, from motives of policy, he repressed his alarm, and turned a calm face to the stranger, as he made his way to the heap of leaves. Mr. Marsden fancied that his memory retained some remembrance of those features, and keen searching eyes, but he could not recall the name.

"What do you want, friend?" said Mr. Marsden.

"Have you got any food, stranger?" said the bushranger;

"I'm just starving."

"What little I have, I will divide with you," said Mr. Marsden; "but it is not much; for if all goes well, I shall arrive at my destination by to-morrow midday. Have you lost your way in the forest?"

"Yes, for a long time, I'm thinking," and the man gave a hoarse laugh. "If you knew just how long I'd been roam-

ing up and down these woods, stranger, maybe you wouldn't care to accommodate me."

"Indeed, I don't see why I shouldn't; at anyrate you're welcome. Just help me to kindle this fire, while I get out my food. All that I have is in my saddle-bags. I think there's enough for a pretty good meal. Have I seen you before, friend? I fancy that I have somewhere."

"Do you remember Darkey Simpson?"
"Darkey Simpson! Yes, of course I do."

"Well, I'm the man. Look! here's the old scar as you said you should know me by once." And the bushranger took off his cap, displaying among the curly locks which still clustered thickly around his forehead, a deep ugly scar.

"So you are! I fancied that I could remember your face, Darkey; though I couldn't recall you by name. It's a

long time since I saw you last."

"Yes, stranger, more'n three years. You were lost in the scrub, if you remember, when I met with you, and led you out of your trouble."

"I do remember; and I've often wondered since if you had left your wild bushranging life. I talked to you about it at the time."

it at the time."

"Yes, you did. You won't grumble if I talk and eat at the same time, mister, will you? I'm just pretty nigh starved. The fact is, I had nobody to give me a helping hand—that's where the difficulty lay."

"But I promised to help you—did I not? I am known to some of the colonial magistrates, and I have helped other men to obtain freedom. Why should I not do the same for you, if you deserve it?"

"Well, stranger, I don't know about deserving it, but I want it—I do, badly. I'm like that young chap they called Ishmael—you know all about him. Everybody's hand is against me, and mine against everybody. It's a hangdog life at the best, and I'm sick of it. Besides, I want to earn a livelihood honestly once more if I can; but I don't dare to be seen in a town, or near one, while there's a price set on my head. I've looked out for you, stranger, times—that's a fact—hoping ye'd get lost in the woods again, or something of that kind, 'cause I wanted to talk to you about it.

But I couldn't see a trace of you, ever, although once or twice I've been pretty close upon you, I know. Well, it came to me somehow—I mustn't say how—that you were journeying into the Pine Lake district, and I determined to track you."

"Now that you've found me, Darkey," returned Mr. Marsden, "I suppose I am to understand that you wish me

to intercede for your pardon?"

"That's just it, mister. That, and nothing less."

"This tea is about fit to drink, Darkey," said Mr. Marsden. "My cup must do service for us both. Try it."

"Not until you have first, mister. I don't know much about politeness, but if you let me drink after you, it is as

much as I can expect, and more."

Mr. Marsden took a good draught of the welcome beverage, and then, refilling the cup, handed it to Darkey. The poor fellow drank it off as if it were the most delicious draught he had ever tasted. How long he had fasted previous to this al fresco entertainment, it would be hard to say.

"Very well; now what are your intentions, provided I obtain your pardon? Mind, I cannot guarantee success; I must do my best, and leave the result. But supposing I

should succeed, what will you do next?"

"Why, mister, I should like to settle in Glentown, where I could hear you preach, and live under your eye. If I could have a friend like you to look after me a bit, I think I should get found by the Good Shepherd, some time or other. Don't you remember, stranger, you told me that the Good Shepherd was always a-looking after lost ones like me?"

"I can't recall all that I said to you then, but I daresay

I did say something like that, Darkey."

"Well, but a rough, ignorant chap like me wants somebody else to look after him too, and if ye wouldn't mind, I'd like to live near ye. Would you mind it?"

"No, certainly not."

"And I suppose, now, I could get work at Glentown?"

"Certain to do so; I know of two or three masters who would be glad to get your services at once as shepherd.

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But that can be discussed after we have communicated with the Government. You must first tell me the special crimes for which you are 'Wanted.'"

"Well, the special offence, I suppose, is my escaping from the convict establishment; because rewards were offered for my apprehension as soon as I got clear off. That was about eight years ago, and I've been wandering about like this ever since. But I've done things since I've been a bushranger which I must not tell you, or you could not plead for my pardon with a clear conscience. I think you'd avoid me, as you would a poisonous sarpent, if you only knew what I've done. No, no; I must keep it dark, mister. I don't know that the police know anything really of my doings, since I have been out in this way; and I can't be expected to tell upon myself."

"Of course not. Well, you really wish to return to an honest life? You desire to quit for ever your wicked, disreputable, lawless life? I will help you with all my

heart, Darkey, provided you are in earnest."

"I was never more in earnest, mister. I'll never eat another mouthful, if I ain't! And if it'll satisfy you, I'll come to Glentown, and live under your eye—work for you, if you'll let me—so that you shall see if I don't keep straight. In earnest, is it mister? I tell ye, when a man's on his last legs, and is just fit to lie down and die because he is sick of his very life, it's no play game with him. I'm dead beat, and if you don't help me, I'm lost."

"You don't seem to have found the devil's service so very

prosperous!"

"Î must confess that I haven't. I don't forget a few things that I've heard here and there; and I used to read in my Bible, when a little fellow at the Sunday-school, these words: 'The wages of sin is death.' They were printed in big letters too, and stuck up against the schoolroom wall—I seem to see them now. I'm going on pretty tidy for them wages, I'm thinking; and in fact, all the way through the devil's wages are not worth taking."

His appearance bore out his words. Haggard, wretched, half-starved, outlawed, this miserable wretch looked the very embodiment of his text. If those deluded lads who

imagine that a highwayman's or a bushranger's life is anything to be coveted, could only have seen Darkey Simpson, as he sat humbly begging Mr. Marsden to pity him, and intercede for him, they would have been quickly disillusionised. Uprightness, rectitude, honesty, God-fearing integrity—these are the qualities which "pay well," both for this world, and the next.

Evening was drawing on now, and the wants of the corporeal man having been satisfied, Mr. Marsden began to bethink himself of his preparation for rest. But first he took out his Bible and read a chapter or two to this "lost sheep," explaining as he went, the now unfamiliar words and phrases to his hearer. Then he prayed, Darkey listening the meanwhile for every petition which specially referred to himself. It was no mean sight, this accidental and yet providential meeting of the minister and the bushranger in the woods. That meeting might be pregnant with great possibilities to Simpson.

In the morning, Darkey, otherwise Richard, was astir before Mr. Marsden was awake. Used to sleeping in the open air, and ever on his guard against detection, he sprang up at the first dawn of light, revolver in hand, as he went to sleep; and it took him a minute or two to recollect that the man lying peacefully on the ground, at the other side of the fire, was his friend and not his foe. About six o'clock, Mr. Marsden awoke to find Darkey busily engaged in kindling a fire at some little distance. The small travelling kettle was soon filled and suspended over the fire, and by the time Mr. Marsden had shaken off the stiffness consequent upon his open air slumbers, the tea was boiled.

Only a crust remained to be shared for breakfast, but that, with the warm cup of tea, made a welcome meal. Mr. Marsden took down the particulars of Simpson's career, so that he might be enabled to make a correct representation to the authorities, and then prepared to go his way. He had many miles to travel before he should arrive at his destination.

"When shall I see you again, Simpson?" queried Mr. Marsden.

"Whenever you like, mister. I'll come to any place you

like to mention, for I shall be mighty anxious to know how

you succeed in the matter."

"Well, I don't know that I shall be out on a journey again for the next three months. Suppose we meet again this day month, on the hills overlooking Glentown? I will be on the hills in the afternoon, if all be well; if you meet me there, I shall be able to report my success or non-success to you. Provided I succeed, I will enable you to return with me to Glentown."

For a moment emotions of joy overspread the bushranger's countenance; then, as he contemplated the possibility of failure in the negotiations for his pardon, he grew sad again.

"And suppose you fail, mister?"

"Then we must think of something else. Anyhow, I will do my best to help you. If by no other means, we must help you out of the country. Keep up heart, Darkey; ask God to prosper my efforts for your liberty; don't commit any more crimes, but look above, and I doubt not but that we'll succeed."

In another five minutes, Darkey Simpson was left to his own reflections, while Mr. Marsden was urging on his steed through the forest-path. These reflections were not very mirthful ones, as you may imagine. All his hopes rested upon Mr. Marsden, and if his efforts failed, there appeared no other prospect but that of disappointment and misery. And although the missionary had hinted at getting Darkey out of the country, that course seemed a very dangerous one. And rather than incur the risk of months and years of forced concealment and disguise, Darkey almost decided that he would surrender to the government. As he sat by the remains of the fire, with his elbows on his knees, and his head resting moodily upon his hands, he furnished a striking exemplification of the words, "The way of transgressors is hard."

# CHAPTER XLIX.

#### REWARDED AT LAST.

"True love is watered aye with tears,
It grows 'neath stormy skies,
It's fenced around with hope and fears,
And fanned with heartfelt sighs.
With chains of gold 'twill not be bound;
Oh! who the heart can buy?
The titled glare, the worldling's care,
Even absence 'twill defy.

"And Time, that kills all other things,
His withering touch 'twill brave:
Twill live in joy, 'twill live in grief,
'Twill live beyond the grave.
'Twill live, 'twill live though buried deep,
In true heart's memorie."—Caroline, Baroness Nairne.

THE reading of a will always causes great commotion in a household. If the deceased be reputedly wealthy, and has many dependants, this commotion is intensified, seeing that each one, feeling a perfectly legitimate anxiety as to the apportionment of the property, hopes that he or she has been remembered in the will. This feeling prevailed very largely in Dr. Lockwood's house, and speculation was very rife in the servants' hall and kitchen as to the way in which their dead master had remembered them. Most of the servants had been with Dr. Lockwood for several years, for, provided they could see eye to eye with him, he was not a bad master on the whole, and had let fall from time to time sundry promises respecting legacies and gifts. Still, among all the anxious wonder respecting their own affairs, the uppermost feeling was one of hope that "Mr. Mark" would occupy his rightful position in the will.

According to custom, the family, and those concerned in the will, assembled after the funeral to hear the document read. Mrs. Lisburne, her daughters, and Mark, were there, beside the other relatives of the dead man, and his servants.

All had been remembered in the will proper, according to their merits or their claims—only Mark's name was excluded from the long list of beneficiaries. Those who were not in the secret, were beginning to think hardly of the deceased, and to cast glances of indignant compassion at Mark, when Mr. Ducie, adjusting his spectacles for the twentieth time, gave a little cough and said, "There is a codicil to the will, my friends, which, while not rendering null any of the provisions of that document, provides that the residue of Dr. Lockwood's property should go to one whom we all believe worthy of it. I refer to Mr. Mark Lisburne." He then read the codicil, which, as you remember, was executed by Dr. Lockwood upon his death-bed, and as he finished, an audible sigh of relief burst from the hearers, as their doubts were dismissed, and their anxieties set at Doctor Lockwood had always prided himself upon being just; and according to his light he was so, although very frequently his notions of justice would have clashed with those of other people. He had desired to be just to Mark, although his action towards him had ended in his banishment from the house; and this codicil was only the expression of his sense of justice awakened into repentant exercise. And as the servants filed out of the room at the conclusion of Lawyer Ducie's reading, they all agreed that a "juster will and codicil could not have been framed." Their old master had gone to the grave, leaving neither heart-burnings nor resentment behind him, as too many do. on account of shameful neglect of lawful claims.

"And what are your plans for the future, Mark?"

Mark looked up from his reverie. All the funeral guests, including the lawyer, were gone, leaving only himself, his mother, and sisters behind. The house, with its appointments and furniture, would fall to him as residuary legatee, and this being known, the servants were beginning to recognize him already as their future master. By degrees, Mark had fallen quite into a brown study, and was only recalled to consciousness by his mother's question.

"I scarcely know, mother. Certainly, my next step will be marriage. After that, I shall follow out the course which seems most feasible."

"Is it still to be Florence, my son?"

"Yes, mother. Florence has held her own place in my heart all these years."

"But are you sure that her affections are yours? You have been divided so long, that it seems to me almost like

an experiment."

"I believe they are. As far as I know, Florence has never loved anybody else; and as far as I am concerned, I can most truthfully say that she has been my only love. Time and distance have only deepened our attachment, while they have also tested it sufficiently for each to depend upon the other."

"Does she know of your intended voyage?"

"Yes. I had purposed sailing a fortnight since, but the illness and death of my uncle delayed my doing so. I shall try, however, to sail next week."

"What about your duties at the infirmary?"

"I have made arrangements to-day to resign my post there. The office is one which must be constantly filled, and as my absence in Australia will take me from it some nine or ten months, I judged it best to resign."

"And with regard to the future, Mark," interrupted one of his sisters, "will you take on Uncle Lockwood's practice?"

"I shall try to do so, Amy. On my return home I shall, if all be well, try to enter on the practice left by Uncle Lockwood. Of course, I know that a large portion of it will go from me in consequence of my absence, but I can work up more. I am well known in the city to a large circle, and I think I shall have as fair a chance as any other medical man."

"Meanwhile---"

"Meanwhile, mother, will you stay here, and take care of the house until I can bring home my little wife? Amy and Bella could come to and fro to see you, could they not?—or remain here altogether with you? I cannot intrust my affairs to servants; and I should like to feel that I was really bringing Florence to a comfortable, well-ordered household. But this I should not be able to do, if the place were left entirely to the control of servants, or locked up under the dominion of moth, and mildew, for nine or ten months."

"Your sisters could not remain here, as our home must have personal superintendence from one or the other of us; but they could take it in turns to come here, so that between the three of us, we could manage pretty well. But, Mark,

you will not require all the old servants."

"No, mother; I was thinking of asking you to keep on two of them—the two you would prefer—and I will discharge the others. Of course, my fortune is not large enough to permit of extravagance in housekeeping; and until I have gained a good practice of my own, we must be content with as small an establishment as we can have."

"Quite right, my son. Begin at the foot of the ladder,

and mount up as you succeed in life."

"Has Miss Godfrey any fortune?" inquired Amy.

"I cannot say. She may have, for Mr. Godfrey has prospered greatly since his removal to Australia. But whether she has a fortune or not, I know that she is a fortune."

"You seem to have a very high opinion of her, brother."

"Not one bit too high, for her excellence is beyond all praise. Glentown will lose one of its most valued residents, for since their removal there, she has been the means of doing untold good in a spiritually destitute locality. She has set going and sustained a work, the effects of which will continue through eternity. Her departure to Australia was a trial, both to her and me—though more to me than to her, I think; but it has been overruled for good."

"Your attachment to her was partly the cause of your

uncle's estrangement, was it not?"

"Yes, mother; uncle had some curious notions about what I should do and what I should not do. For instance, he was not opposed to my marrying, but he insisted that I should marry somebody richer and higher in the social scale than Florence. I could not submit to his requirements, and as the result I had to leave his house. But it all came right at last. Poor old man! I hope he is safe in the better land now."

"I believe he is; I think he saw the right way at last."

"Mother," said Mark, after a pause, "you will give Florence a welcome? You will try to make her feel that she gains in you a mother? She will be far from her own home and friends, and will miss her own family circle. Will you try to let her have a little corner of your heart?"

"A great deal of it, I hope, my son. As far as I am concerned, it will not be my fault if Florence does not get on comfortably with us. I am quite longing to see her."

"Thank you, mother. May I tell her that you say so?"

"Yes; and say that I am prepared to welcome another daughter. I love her already because of what you have told me."

Three weeks later, the outward-bound ship, *Petrel*, was dancing along through the blue waters, towards the Australian continent. Mark was on board, looking forward anxiously to the time when he should arrive in Glentown.

## CHAPTER L.

### TWO WEDDINGS IN THE BUSIL

"And every ear is trying,
While all beside is still,
To hear the bride replying
Her sweet but firm 'I w.ll.

The soft 'I will' is spoken,
A glance as soft exchanged,
That vow shall ne'er be broken,
Nor those fond hearts estranged."

Mrs. Robert Dering.

GLENTOWN was en fete, and yet it was sad. A well-beloved member of the little forest settlement was about to leave it, probably never to return again, and another, also esteemed for her usefulness, was going forth with her sailor husband, to wander here and there, upon the world of waters—at least, for an indefinite period.

Mark had arrived at Glentown, safely, a fortnight previously. During this fortnight, he had enjoyed himself amazingly in the wild freedom of his rambles over hill and plain, until he grew so enamoured of the country, that only considerations of prudence recalled his thoughts to Man-

chester, and his expected career there.

The little iron chapel of which I have told you, was decorated with boughs and flowers for the occasion, and the scholars in the Sunday-school had arranged to strew flowers in the pathway of the young brides. The weddings had been postponed for a few days, pending the arrival of Charlie Capern, and Alfred Godfrey. Their ship was daily expected in Melbourne harbour, but a week of contrary winds kept them out of port. However, at last they had come upon the scene, and now the chief actors in the important programme were anxiously anticipating the happy morning. And not only they, but everybody else, for every man, woman, and child in Glentown who could be spared, had resolved to be present at the ceremony. Surely a wedding was never so much discussed before?

The morning dawned—still, beautiful, glorious—a lovely specimen of what the Australian summer day is. Charlie Capern could not find room at Mr. Godfrey's, although he had originally intended to make that his home, so he was domiciled at Mr. Marsden's, Mark being, of course, Mr. Godfrey's guest; and as the two strangers looked abroad on the face of nature they thought they had never seen anything so beautiful before. Certainly, to Mark it presented a great contrast to the dinginess and smokiness of city life. Harry, Mabel, and Frank, were skipping about like wild children, peeping ever and anon into what had been the school-room, which, being the largest room in the house, had been improvised into the breakfast-room for the occasion. The wedding breakfast was laid there—such as it was, for an English belle would have been mortally offended at the idea of calling such an entertainment a wedding breakfast. Mark had fortunately remembered to bring a bride-cake with him from England, and that was the only thing which told of wedding gaiety. No silver, or electro-plate, no elegant trifles from Gunter's, no costly presents to be displayed, no wealth of bridal attire. What was there, do you say? Well, first, there were some immense joints of beef, and mutton, varied by specimens of Australian fish and game. Then there were some enormous loaves of honest, home-baked bread, suitable for appetites of backwoods magnitude. Here and there, were placed dishes of fruit, mostly wild fruit, picked by little girls in the school, and dedicated by them to their teacher's use. Around the table were ranged the school-benches, and the odour of flowers filled the room. Homeliness, solidity, and simplicity, were the chief character

istics of this wedding breakfast.

While the children peep into the breakfast-room, and arrange and re-arrange the dishes and jugs of flowers—for vases, epergnes, and ornaments of that description had not reached so far into the bush—and while Mark and Alfred hold one more friendly chat about old times in Manchester, Mrs. Godfrey creeps to Florence's room, where she is all alone, thinking of the life which she is now about to take upon her in exchange for that of her residence here, for one last good-bye talk. It seemed to Mrs. Godfrey that she could not realize the truth of the fact that she was about to lose her eldest daughter. I suppose mothers rarely do. It seems like a rending of the heart's best affections, to know that by those vows uttered at the altar, you have lost for ever, one for whom you have lived, and suffered, and laboured, and that she is no longer yours, but his. Gone from your home, to the home of another! Will that other love, and cherish, and shield, as you have? will the unknown lot be bright with joy, and happiness, and mutual love? or will it be crowded by unkindness, neglect, or hardship? You cannot tell; so you drop the veil of futurity through which you fain would pry, and tearfully hope for the best, committing the while the keeping of your darling to Him who never slumbers nor sleeps.

"Florence, dearest, may I come in?"

"Yes, mother dear. I should like one more quiet chat

with you, if we could have it."

"That is just the thing for which I am come. I shall miss you so much, Florence; it will scarcely seem like home to me after you are gone."

"I know it, mother; and don't you think I shall miss you? Not a day will pass but I shall remember you all, and fancy

myself talking to you."

"Still, you will not lack kindness, Florence. You will not sorrow for our absence. I shall give you to Mark, with the fullest confidence that he will be a loving husband to you. Had we not this confidence, your father and I could scarcely consent to your union. But our trial will be in the fact that so many thousands of miles separate us. Possibly we part now for ever."

"No, mother, no," cried Florence. "You will come to England to spend your last days—you have promised me that, you know. And beside that, I may come out to Australia some day, for a visit. Mark will never say to me nay

if it is at all practicable, I know."

"You will move in quite a different sphere of life, now," continued Mrs. Godfrey. "As the wife of a medical man you will have many opportunities of doing good, and I am sure I need not urge their improvement upon you. You have proved yourself faithful in the employment of the talent intrusted to you out here. My daughter, I know, will not be wanting in the more enlarged sphere to which she is called. And as the last counsel I can give you before you go, I wish to say be faithful still. I want to tell you, too, for your encouragement, that your faithfulness out here has been the means of my decision for God. You know, Florence, that up till the time we left England I was only moral; and for a long time after we came out to Australia, I knew nothing experimentally of the love of Jesus. But I learnt to seek it, from you. My own child was my mother in the faith. So, Florence, you are doubly dear to me; and it is with a smothered pang that I part with

Florence could not reply at once. Presently she said, "I think Mabel will make up for my loss, mother. She seems to be growing up quite a thoughtful girl. And though so far away I shall come near you very often in spirit. I shall send long letters to you, telling you every particular of my new life, so that you may almost see me, as it were, from day to day. And if I have been useful here, I feel not proud

but humble at the thought that I have been made instru-

mental in bringing a blessing to those I love."

"God bless you, Florence," said Mrs. Godfrey. "You know not what the coming years will bring out of joy or sorrow; but whatever they bring I know that you will always have a sure refuge in the God of your youth. Only, if it had been the Lord's will, I should have liked to have been near you."

Knock—knock; somebody is announcing an arrival in no very gentle manner. Presently the door opens, and Mabel, all radiant in her bridesmaid's attire, intimates that Sallie Mostyn is waiting below, and that the time appointed for the wedding is drawing near. Sallie Mostyn and Mabel are to act as Florence's bridesmaids, Nelly Sharp being attended by her own sister Lottie. This announcement of course put an end to the tête-à-tête between mother and daughter, and Mrs. Godfrey gave place to Mabel and Sallie, who busied themselves with Florence's wedding dress at once.

Not a very grand wedding-dress, but neat and useful. It had been brought up with great care from Melbourne, by Alfred, to whom the business of purchasing it was intrusted. Very little ornament could it boast, and Florence smiled as she surveyed herself in the dressing-glass. Her own wealth of hair, which fell in a mass of curls upon her shoulders, together with her still girlish beauty, adorned her more than jewels or diamonds could have done. So Mark thought as he surveyed his bride in the little chapel, some half hour later. Very nearly all the residents in Glentown were there, and the two wedding groups were pretty large, considering the limited state of society. Mr. Marsden, with his usual calm, sedate manner, stood ready to perform the ceremony Close at hand, stood the relatives of the brides, and not far off, the children of the Sunday-school, to whom the naval attire of Charlie Capern formed as great an attraction as anything in the programme. Mr. Godfrey looked thoughtful and sober, Mrs. Godfrey somewhat sad; Mabel mischievous, and Alfred delighted; while the juniors, Harry and Frank, amused themselves by criticising everything and everybody in the chapel. To them, a wedding was good fun; they would most likely have rejoiced in such an event had it happened every day. But their tittering was stopped for a minute or two, as they heard the question put to Mark.

"Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and health, as long as ye both shall live?"

And Mark's voice spoke out honestly and sturdily, "I will."

Then they heard the question put to Florence, and she in turn vowed her wifely vow. Harry and Frank began to think that, after all, marriage might be something both solemn and sober, as well as jolly. They commenced to realize that they should miss her after her departure, for ever since their recollection she had performed the duties of most elder sisters—which duties generally include an unlimited amount of ministering to the necessities and amusements of the younger ones. Both in play and at lessons, Florence had ever been their good angel, stepping in and filling up the gap in their family life, which otherwise would have remained unfilled. And though sometimes elder sisters have to indulge in a little seasonable firmness, yet the younger branches of the family find a difference, not at all in their favour, when the time comes for these sisters to remove to homes of their own. Possibly the boys thought of all this; at anyrate, they looked grimly at Mark, and more than half wished that he had remained away.

Presently the ceremony was over, and Mark and Florence pronounced "man and wife" by Mr. Marsden, and then they stood aside for Charlie and Nellie to be made one. The girls of the Sunday-school struck up their liveliest tune as the young couples wended their way out of the chapel, while some dozen or so of the younger ones strewed flowers in the pathway. Florence's wedding party wended its way to Mr. Godfrey's house, leaving the other to proceed to Mr. Sharp's; and so happy and contented were they all that they never once thought it a hardship to walk to the chapel and back. So primitive were the usages and customs of this backwoods settlement, that they neither missed nor mourned the showy equipages which would have been the inevitable accompaniments of an English wedding. But I venture to say that their

happiness was not less intense, their trust no less perfect, and their content no less complete, on this account. Did not this day crown many a long day of patient waiting and hopeful trust? Was it not the day of rejoicing, because the love which had been so long tested had at last received its crown of union? Henceforth may the sweet promise which life held out for them be abundantly fulfilled. May the flowers strewn in their pathway be only typical of a sweet and pleasant path of life; and if thorns should lie there and here. hidden beneath the roses, may they learn bravely to bear the smart, knowing who appointed the sweet and the bitter. That their careers would be all sunshine, they could not think; but if faith gilded the horizon of life, the dark cloud would invariably present its silver lining. After the experience of the past, there was little doubt but that Mark would hold fast his principles, and Florence her faith.

And so, as soon as Florence had accomplished the work which God had set for her to do in the Australian wilderness, He removed her to another sphere of labour—one not

less important, although less public.

"Braw weddings," said Adam Thompson, "and I wish the young folks muckle happiness," and as he turned away, his words were echoed by Seth Brown, the horny-handed blacksmith, who declared that the two brides were the prettiest girls he had ever seen in his life.

#### CHAPTER LI.

#### PARTING MEMORIES.

"How many lives, made beautiful and sweet, By self-devotion and by self-restraint, Whose pleasure is to run, without complaint, On unknown errands of the Paraclete,"

"I make answer, 'I am satisfied;'
I dare not ask, I know not what is best;
God hath already said what shall betide."—Longfellow.

"What! are you waiting for my news, Darkey? I didn't

expect to find you so soon."

"So soon, is it, mister? I've been counting the hours to this day, and it has been the longest month I've ever known."

The speakers were Mr. Marsden, and Darkey Simpson. The month appointed by the former, had passed by, and, after sundry communications with the government, Mr. Marsden took his anticipated journey into the hills to see

Darkey upon the subject.

"Well, I suppose you are anxious to know how I've succeeded, so I'll go at once into the matter. I wrote the authorities twice, representing your case, and obtained letters of recommendation from two magistrates, who knew me too well to imagine that I should abuse the confidence they place in me. Beside that, I obtained a personal interview with a gentleman possessing great influence with the Colonial Government, and, in short, I have left no stone unturned to secure your pardon."

" And----"

"And I have succeeded," replied Mr. Marsden, looking kindly upon the anxious, haggard face of the outcast. "Here is your pardon, given under the seal of Her Majesty's Government, in response to my undertaking that you shall, from this time, lead an honest, sober life."

Darkey clutched at the precious document as if it had been the title-deed to an estate, and flung himself on the ground at Mr. Marsden's feet, completely overdone. His long pent-up feelings asserted their sway now that deliverance had come, and a series of convulsive sobs proved how much this pardon meant to him. So many years of Ishmaelitish wandering up and down the woods, had caused him to feel cut off from all communication or equality with his own kind. I think he scarcely believed that Mr. Marsden had been speaking the truth, for he looked up again with a hesitating kind of manner, and said:

"You are not mocking me? It's all true?"
"Yes, perfectly true. Read there for yourself."

Darkey opened the precious paper, and with trembling eagerness read his permission to return to freedom and civilized life. But even then he needed Mr. Marsden's interpretation of the blessing.

"May I come to live in Glentown?"

"Yes; or anywhere else. Nobody can molest you now. Your past life is all blotted out, as far as the government is concerned, and now you may do as you like, provided you live an honest life."

Just then a horseman was seen in the distance, and so great was the force of habit, that Darkey was about to fly

to the nearest wood, but his companion stopped him.

"Stay where you are. If that man should belong to the mounted police, he cannot touch you. Nobody can hurt you now. Here is your title to liberty, and I am the witness of it. You must come home with me; and after you have recruited your strength for a few days, you will be able to obtain some kind of employment."

"Let me work for you, sir. I'll not ask any wages—only bare food and lodging, so that I can be near you."

"That course is not practicable, neither would it be just to yourself. You may remain at my place for a few weeks, doing what you can, till you are stronger; but then you must seek for employment. I think you need not be long without work. Suppose we return to Glentown, now? It will be dark by the time we get there."

They turned, and commenced the journey to Glentown,

Darkey being lost meanwhile in a tumult of joy and excitement. It was but a few miles to Mr. Marsden's house, but so weak and tottering was the miserable man, that Mr. Marsden was compelled to assist him on his way. Lack of food, clothing, and shelter, had made him old before his time. Now that he should have been in his prime, he appeared decrepit, feeble, and dejected. So much had the devil's service done for him.

But the time came when Darkey was a new man. Little by little, step by step, he renounced his old habits, and put off the vices of his past life. Under the fostering care of Mr. Marsden, he grew up at length, sober, honest, faithful, and, to all appearances, God-fearing. Darkey Simpson is now slowly toiling on his way toward competence and comfort; respecting and respected among the people with whom his lot is cast. If Mr. Marsden can claim but this one soul rescued from destruction through his ministrations, he will not have laboured in vain in those Australian wilds.

We must now take a parting glance at our acquaintances.

Alfred Godfrey has renounced the sea, and contentedly joined his father at sheep-farming. He will one day become a large landed proprietor in Glentown.

Mr. Godfrey and his family still reside in Glentown, acquiring possessions, in the way of flocks, and herds, and lands, which will one day constitute them independent of all agricultural pursuits. The younger branches of the family seem inclined to make Australia the land of their adoption, preferring colonial life to that which they hear described as "English life." Yet still it would be strange if they had no yearning towards England; indeed, as long as Florence lives, Manchester will always be home to them. Most emigrants retain a love for the land of their birth, even though comfort, prosperity, or honour, has been gained by them in another land; and the Godfreys are no exception to this rule.

Mr. Marsden is still at Glentown, but he has now a large and increasing congregation. The town has exceeded its former narrow limits, spreading itself north and south, east and west, while daily, more building lots are required to meet the wishes of new emigrants. The residents are not now wholly engaged in pastoral and agricultural pursuits; some of the arts which accompany civilization have found their way there. Glentown boasts a printing-press and newspaper of its own; stores are being opened on every side for the sale of the various commodities required in social life; and recently, a photographer has set up a studio there. With this access of population, rival religious sects will, without doubt, spring into existence; but whatever divine may arrive at the town to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, or some portion of them, Mr. Marsden will ever retain his own honoured place among them.

The "minister's man" is Richard—once "Darkey"—Simpson. The poor fellow's attachment and gratitude to Mr. Marsden were such that he could not endure to be separated from him. Various offers of employment were made to Simpson, but rejecting them all, he remained faithful to the establishment of his benefactor. Mr. Marsden's horse never owned a kinder groom, or his garden, a more

industrious gardener.

Most of the old hands in Mr. Godfrey's employ have migrated to other parts of Australia. Among the rest, the Mostyns and the Willises have moved further into the bush, and are striving to attain the positions of sheep-farmers. The Sharps have become possessed of land near Glentown, and still keep up their connection with the friends there, driving into the town, Sabbath by Sabbath, in a light wagon, to join in the services at Mr. Marsden's new chapel, which is quite a recent erection.

Just one word about "Ebenezer Chapel"—for that is its name. It is a fine stone building, with some attempts at architectural beauty, very creditable to the architect and people. It will hold several hundred persons, and is filled Sunday after Sunday with attentive, appreciative hearers. The iron building once used as a chapel, is now utilized as a school-room—the work which Florence commenced being carried on successfully by her co-workers. Possibly her name is recalled at times, by those who benefit by the school, with sentiments of regard and affection; but whether

this be the case or not, the fruit of her efforts will follow her into eternity. Many souls will be born for glory, who otherwise would never have heard the gospel's joyful sound.

Dick Fowler at last received his long-looked-for letter from his wife; and in response to his yearnings and entreaties, his friends at home sent him the invitation to return. In his new life in England, he has kept firmly to his resolutions of amendment, and is walking with joyful feet in the

good old "way of peace."

Charlie Capern and his wife, Nellie, went for several voyages together after their marriage, until they grew tired of the sea, and Nellie longed for a sweet home-nest of their own. Thereupon, Charlie surrendered all his dreams of maritime advancement, and having obtained a situation in a steam-packet office, settled down in a Scottish seaport. Nellie still cherishes the idea of going back to Australia some day, with her two little boys, in order to take another glimpse of the old people, and show her children the scenes amid which she passed her childhood.

Harry Connor is steadily progressing upwards. He seems determined to rise, and his fellow-clerks sometimes point knowingly at him, as they quote the old proverb, "Better be born lucky than rich." But if you were to ask Harry himself the secret of his success in life, he would tell you that it is not "luck," but steady adherence to principle and duty. Mrs. Connor gets increasingly proud of him; while as for Pierre, it would be difficult to persuade him that Manchester held another man such as Harry Connor

has proved himself to be.

Mr. and Mrs. Lisburne are still resident in Manchester, loving and beloved. Mr. Lisburne is winning a large practice and making many friends. It is likely that he will win riches; but fortunately for themselves, both he and Florence have learned the art of using money wisely. They were faithful in few things in the days of their youth, and according to the course of Providence, they are now introduced into a larger sphere of usefulness. And so it always is. Faithfulness in little things is sure to precede honour and opportunity in greater. Florence's hands are filled to

a great extent, it is true, by the numerous demands made on her by her household and little ones, but nevertheless, she still strives to do good to the bodies and souls of those who need her aid. Mr. Lisburne is full of work, and sometimes of worry; but he finds many a spare half-hour to go here or there upon his Master's business. Useful, honoured, and blessed are they both, beyond the majority of their fellows.

Long before Florence's marriage, the cotton famine came to an end in Manchester, and by degrees the mills resumed their former busy clamour; while, in place of want and wretchedness, comfort and plenty dawned again. Many of the factory hands learned thrift and thoughtfulness from the ministry of that terrible time of suffering, so that though some bitter memories remained behind, the retrospect was not all dark. Plenty of work brought greater thankfulness, and plenty of wages, greater thrift.

Miss Brookland still lives and labours, a pattern Sundayschool teacher. Florence and she are fast friends; and in many a domestic emergency, Miss Brookland takes a mother's place. She is fondly attached to her old pupil, and regards with thankful feelings the usefulness which followed Florence's removal to Australia. She will often talk of old times, and of Florence's timid efforts at evangelization,

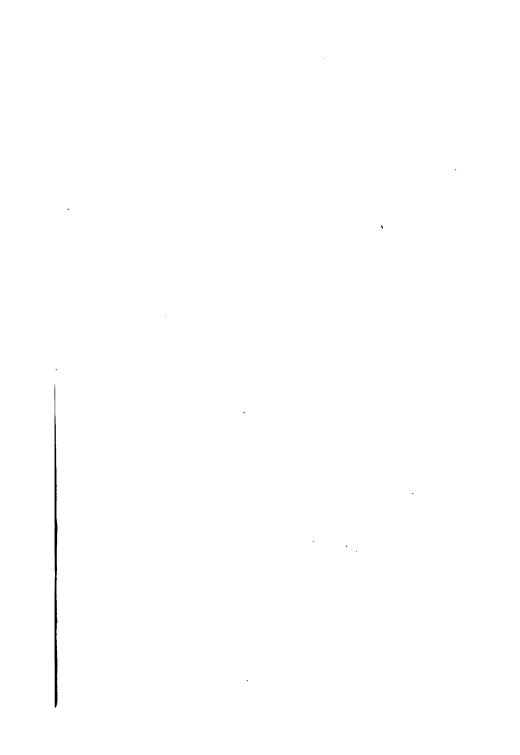
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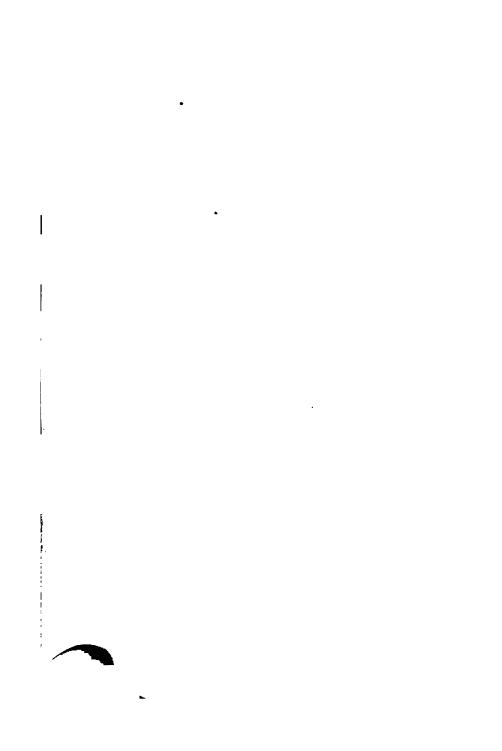
"Yes, my dear; you went out, little dreaming how much you were to accomplish; but for all that, you did a noble missionary work. Your faith received a rich reward."

And Florence sweetly replies that it was Miss Brookland who first put the idea of doing missionary work into her head.

Never mind who first put the idea into her head—it took root there, and budded, and blossomed. As the result, a little settlement in a far-off land will have sons and daughters born for glory in its midst.

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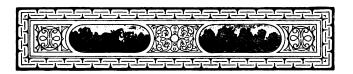
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